

**FIGHTING
BLINDNESS
CANADA**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 14, 2022

**Screens Off for Sight 24-hour challenge
gives Canadians eyes a break in support of Fighting Blindness Canada**

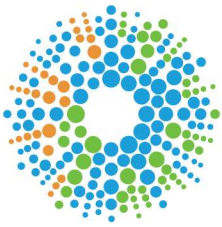


Canadians have spent the past two years of the pandemic consumed by screens.

A [2021 study from Western University](#) found that screen time use increased in children by an average of 3.2 hours per day following COVID-related school closures. [Statistics Canada](#) reported in 2020 that Canadians increased their TV time (60 per cent of men and 66 per cent of women) and Internet usage (63% of men and 69% of women).

As a result, [Fighting Blindness Canada](#) is asking Canadians to give their eyes a break as part of the [Screens Off for Sight 24-hour challenge](#), kicking off at **6 pm on Saturday, March 19, 2022**. The annual 24-hour event gives people the opportunity to indulge in many activities away from smartphone, TV and computer screens, while raising both awareness of eye health and funds for new treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases.

The event is also about self-care. The Canadian Ophthalmological Society says our eyes benefit from turning off our screens. Between 50 and 90 per cent of adults regularly using phones and laptops experience symptoms such as red, watery or dry eyes, eye fatigue, difficulty focusing and headaches. That's because on average, research finds we only blink five times per minute while looking at screens, whereas normally we blink 12 times per minute. The Canadian Association of Optometrists recommends the 20/20/20 rule to protect eye health while watching screens: for every 20 minutes of screen time, look 20 feet away for 20 seconds to give your eyes a break.



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“Over eight million Canadians live with a blinding eye disease that puts them at significant risk of losing their sight, but three out of four cases can be prevented if diagnosed early and with access to treatments,” says Doug Earle, President, and CEO of [Fighting Blindness Canada](#). “Still, the number of Canadians living with uncorrectable vision loss is expected to grow from 1.2 million to 2 million Canadians by 2050, making it clear that we need new treatments and health policy changes to prevent blindness and restore vision. Spending 24 hours without screens shows one perspective of this reality and how important it is for all of us to act now, offering hope to those who have lost their sight and helping us protect our vision for future generations.”

For more tips on healthy eye habits and to join the Screens Off for Sight challenge, Canadians can visit [FBCScreensOff.ca](#), create a personal fundraising page, encourage family and friends to [donate](#) and share posts over social media tagging [Fighting Blindness Canada](#) and using the hashtag #ScreensOffForSight.

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About Fighting Blindness Canada

Fighting Blindness Canada (FBC) is the largest charitable funder of vision research in Canada. Over our 48-year history, FBC has contributed over \$40 million in funding for the development of sight-saving treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases. Thanks to our supporters, FBC is helping drive forward research to understand why vision loss occurs, how it can be slowed, and how sight can be restored. To learn more, visit [fightingblindness.ca](#) or call 1-800-461-3331. For vision health inquiries, call 1-888-626-2995 or email healthinfo@fightingblindness.ca to reach FBC's Health Information Service.

Contact:

Jackie Rosen
Executive Assistant to Doug Earle, President & CEO
416-360-4200 Ext. 246
jrosen@fightingblindness.ca