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CATARACTS REMAIN A MYSTERY, STUDY SHOWS

A new survey commissioned by Alcon Canada, revealed that over half of Canadians do not know much about cataracts and cataract surgery; and 59 per cent are unaware that there are options to treat cataracts and other vision conditions at once¹. This is particularly concerning as cataracts affect 2.5 million Canadians every year² and are one of the leading causes of blindness and low vision in age-related eye diseases³.

With National Cataract Awareness Month happening this June, Alcon is emphasizing the importance of regular eye exams and awareness of cataracts, as part of their ongoing See the Full Picture campaign.

"Our eyes are our windows to the world and no two are the same," says Dr. Kathy Cao, a Toronto-based ophthalmologist with the Kensington Eye

Institute. "It's so important that everyone is proactive about their eye health, visiting an eye care professional every year to protect their sight, especially if there are changes in their vision."

As people age, their eyes change and different natural eye conditions may develop. Two of the most common aging eye conditions are presbyopia and cataracts. Presbyopia is a gradual loss in the eye's ability to pull the lens into shape affecting our ability to focus on close objects.

A cataract is the clouding of the lens in your eye, caused from protein build up over time. For people who have cataracts, vision becomes increasingly blurry, making it difficult to see⁴.

Vision loss can affect a patient's ability to perform simple daily tasks and it

diminishes the beauty that life has to offer through one's vision. Colours become muted, expressions on loved one's faces become difficult to see and activities like reading and driving become nearly impossible. It's as if you are seeing everything through a cloud or fog.

The survey, conducted by Leger, The Research Intelligence Group, was designed to examine the perceptions of and awareness of cataracts and vision health among Canadians between the ages of 55-79. It revealed that seeing clearly is incredibly important to Canadians -- 75 per cent prioritize clearly seeing the faces of loved ones, 69 per cent want to have the ability to see details and colours more clearly, and 66 per cent want to feel more confident when travelling the world as the top reasons for wanting clear vision¹.

Yet, the majority of people surveyed spend very little time thinking about their vision and for those who have cataracts, 50 per cent say that fear is a barrier to seeking treatment¹.

"We often hear from patients that they are worried or nervous about cataract surgery," says Dr. Cao. "While every surgery should be carefully considered, cataract surgery is generally safe and done on an outpatient basis, which

means patients go home the same day after surgery, and often start to notice vision improvements within a couple of days and may return to regular life activities shortly after."

Before having cataract surgery, it's important that patients have informed discussions with your surgeon about your vision goals. There are a variety of different lens replacement options used during cataract surgery that can treat multiple eye conditions at once. Choosing the lens for your goals could mean seeing the world in vivid colour or not having to wear reading glasses.

For years, cataract replacement lens options were limited. Now patients have the option of trifocal lenses that provide superior vision at multiple distances allowing patients to see everything near, far and in-between. For many patients frustrated with constantly searching for reading glasses to read the paper or their phone, the opportunity to become glasses free is a huge advantage.

"I've always loved shape and colour and texture and I hadn't realized how much I was missing," says Tracey Dorey, patient and retired teacher. "Over the last few years, my vision had deteriorated to the point where I was living in a narrow world of muted colour. Since my surgery, my whole

outlook about who I am and what I can do has changed. I feel like a whole new person -- it's been such a big turning point in my life."

To learn more about cataracts, cataract surgery and lens options, visit your eye care professional to receive a comprehensive eye exam and visit SeeTheFullPicture.ca. To help guide the discussion with your eye care professional, download a discussion guide here.

Survey Methodology

Leger, The Research Intelligence Group, surveyed 1503 Canadians, aged 55-79, between November 8 and November 18, 2018 using Leger's online panel, LegerWeb. A probability sample of the same size would yield a margin of error +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. Leger's online panel has approximately 400,000 members nationally with a retention rate of 90%. Panel members were randomly selected to receive an email invitation to the survey.

About Cataracts

A cataract is a cloudy area in the natural lens of the eye that affects vision. As a cataract develops, the eye's lens gradually becomes hard and cloudy allowing less light to pass through, which makes it more difficult to see. The vast majority of cataracts happen

as a result of normal aging but radiation exposure, taking steroids, diabetes, and eye trauma can accelerate the development of cataracts. Cataracts are the most common age-related eye condition and the leading cause of preventable blindness⁴. Currently, more than 2.5 million people in Canada have cataracts². Cataracts are treated by removing the eye's cloudy natural lens and surgically replacing it with an intraocular lens or IOL. More than 98 per cent of cataract surgeries are considered successful and patients typically can return to their normal routines within 24 hours⁴.

About Astigmatism and Presbyopia

Astigmatism is a variation in the shape or curvature of the cornea and, if left untreated, can cause blurred vision at all distances. Presbyopia is an eye condition that occurs as part of natural aging. It involves the gradual loss of the eye's ability to actively focus on close objects, such as smart phones, computers, books and menus. The first signs of presbyopia are eye-strain, difficulty seeing in dim light and problems focusing on small objects and/or fine print. Once a person is in their 40s, it is likely they will experience presbyopia and will require vision correction such as reading glasses or multifocal contact lenses.

BE KIND: OSHAWA TRAILS ARE FOR EVERYONE

Oshawa's trail system provides more than 27 kilometers of paved surface for you to enjoy. Our trails offer opportunities for physical activities like walking, running, and cycling, as well as a safe and environmentally friendly way of travelling and getting to and from work,

school, shopping and nearby parks.

With the return of nice weather, trail users are reminded to be courteous to one another and follow these rules so that everyone may enjoy Oshawa's trail system:

Keep dogs on a minimal leash (not exceeding two meters)

Keep to the right, except when passing;

E-bike users and cyclists should:

Give warning before passing by using a bell or verbal

indication;

Travel at a safe speed;

Use caution around pedestrians. Dismount when crossing streets and in underpasses.

Additionally, for the safety of pedestrians, e-bikes are not allowed on sidewalks and must use the road. When travelling along roadways and streets, including bike lanes, e-bike users are to follow the same rules of the road that apply to cyclists. For more information on safe cycling, visit the Ministry of Transportation's

webpage.

Community members are also reminded to help keep our parks clean by using the garbage cans where provided or taking your litter home, and to respect and protect nature by leaving flowers, plants and trees for others to enjoy and not feeding wildlife.

For more information on the Trail Users Code and e-bikes use, visit www.oshawa.ca/parks and www.oshawa.ca/e-bike.



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