



PRESS RELEASE

#WorldSightDay – All Eyes Encouraged to Focus on Glaucoma

New national survey reveals 45% of Canadians 50+ are not aware that glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness in Canada

Montreal, QC, October 14, 2021 – Today is World Sight Day, a timely opportunity to define the importance of proactive vision care and increase understanding of glaucoma. Glaucoma is an eye disease where increased eye pressure (intraocular pressure) can damage the optic nerve and lead to permanent vision loss.¹ In a new national survey conducted by Leger Research, 45 per cent of Canadians 50+ are not aware that glaucoma is one of the leading causes of blindness in Canada.²

The survey also revealed that 42 per cent of Canadians 50+ have not seen an optometrist within the last 18 months. Furthermore, 24 per cent of Canadians 50+ have experienced vision strain from increased screen time within the last 18 months. Lastly according to the survey, Albertans, Ontarians, Quebecers, and Atlantic Canadians are significantly more likely to say they suffered vision strain from extra time on computer monitors, smart phones, e-readers and watching television compared to Canadians over 50 in the Prairies.

Glaucoma – Stop the Thief of Sight

It's estimated 400,000 Canadians are impacted by glaucoma.³ A 'thief of sight,' glaucoma develops slowly over time, making it difficult to notice any symptoms. Canadians living with glaucoma may experience a gradual narrowing of their peripheral vision. There is no cure for glaucoma and if not proactively managed it will cause optic nerve damage leading to irreversible loss of sight.³ However, optometrist and ophthalmologists can detect and manage glaucoma. Canadians are encouraged to learn about the effects of glaucoma, and access resources for additional support such as the glaucoma section of the Fighting Blindness Canada website ([FightingBlindness.ca](https://fightingblindness.ca)).

Glaucoma in Perspective (GiP)

In partnership with Fighting Blindness Canada, Allergan has developed the Glaucoma in Perspective (GiP) app designed to help patients understand the impact of their glaucoma and disease progression. Created by Professor David Crabb, the GiP app was developed with research and insights into patients' perception of sight loss with glaucoma. GiP has been used across the United Kingdom with great success and is being adapted for Canada. The Glaucoma in Perspective (GiP) app is coming soon to the Apple Store and Google Play for free download.

[#WorldSightDay](#)

To recognize [#WorldSightDay](#), the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness ([IAPB.org](https://iapb.org)) has gathered a group of leading global vision organizations and launched the [#LoveYourEyes](#) campaign, encouraging one million people around the world to get their eyes checked by Oct. 14th.

Statements:

- “World Sight Day is an important event that is coming at an especially timely moment as the pandemic has now been amongst us for over 20 months. Every week, I see several patients that have been lost to follow-up for over a year due to COVID fears of seeing their eye care team and they have now suffered cataclysmic and irreversible loss of vision in one or both eyes. Most common diseases like cataract or macular degeneration have early and noticeable symptoms for patients. Glaucoma usually damages the peripheral vision first, so it can go unnoticed by patients as the disease worsens, and thus is known as the "silent thief of sight". The pandemic has been a tragic eye opener to the consequences of delayed health care in so many areas of medicine, and we must do everything possible to address its glaucoma impact right now.” - **Dr. David B. Yan, Ophthalmologist-in-Chief, Mount Sinai Hospital, University of Toronto - Glaucoma Service Director, Kensington Eye Institute.**
- “There is no cure for glaucoma. It’s why research is critical. However, early detection and treatment can help prevent damage to the optic nerve and save vision. Anyone can develop glaucoma but there are several different factors that can increase your risk of developing the disease. Know your risks. See your eye care professional annually to establish your eye health baseline. You are not alone. FightingBlindness.ca has tremendous resources to help and there is support and resources like the Glaucoma in Perspective (GiP) app will help manage the effects of glaucoma.” - **Doug Earle, President & CEO, Fighting Blindness Canada.**
- “Patients with glaucoma don’t normally exhibit symptoms of vision loss until they receive a proper eye exam. The purpose of the GiP app is to simplify glaucoma to ensure that doctors are able to explain the disease and show an accurate visual representation of glaucoma to newly diagnosed patients. This is an app that makes it simple for patients to adhere to treatment and share information about their disease to their loved ones.” - **Dr. Professor David Crabb, GiP app developer and Professor of Statistics and Vision Research, City University London.**
- “Our purpose in Glaucoma is to create a future where people’s vision lasts a lifetime. We understand the importance of eye care, and that’s why we continue to search for new treatments to help preserve and protect our patients' vision. We’ve been creating innovative products and services for healthcare providers and patients for over 70 years, and we challenge what’s possible each and every day. We’re proud to launch the new Glaucoma in Perspective (GiP) app in partnership with Fighting Blindness Canada and remain committed to supporting Canadians living with and managing eye diseases.” - **Tracey Ramsay, Vice President and General Manager, AbbVie Canada.**

About the Survey

Commissioned by Allergan, an AbbVie Company, the survey was conducted using Leger’s online panel between September 10 to 12, 2021 with 684 Canadians aged 50 and over. The estimated margin of error is $\pm 3.75\%$, 19 times out of 20.

About Fighting Blindness Canada

Fighting Blindness Canada (FBC) is Canada’s leading private funder of vision research. FBC offers hope to Canadians by identifying the best, most promising research that is driving treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases, and by raising and stewarding funds to support this essential, sight-saving research. Over our 45-year history, FBC has invested over \$40 million to support vision research and

education across Canada: that's over 200 research grants that have led to over 600 new discoveries in areas such as stem cell research, neuroprotective therapies, technological developments, pharmaceuticals, and gene therapies. FBC is also committed to developing vision research funding partnerships in Canada and internationally. Through these partnerships, FBC has helped to unlock more than \$10 million to drive research forward. All of the research and educational initiatives funded support the goals of understanding why vision loss occurs, how it can be slowed or stopped, and how sight can be restored.

About AbbVie

AbbVie's mission is to discover and deliver innovative medicines that solve serious health issues today and address the medical challenges of tomorrow. We strive to have a remarkable impact on people's lives across several key therapeutic areas: immunology, oncology, neuroscience, eye care, virology, women's health and gastroenterology, in addition to products and services across its Allergan Aesthetics portfolio. For more information about AbbVie, please visit us at www.abbvie.ca. Follow [@abbviecanada](https://twitter.com/abbviecanada) on Twitter or find us on [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/abbvie).

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¹ Fighting Blindness Canada. About Glaucoma. Retrieved from https://www.fightingblindness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/FBC_OnePager_Glaucoma.pdf. Accessed October 13, 2021

² Canadian Association of Optometrists. About Glaucoma. Retrieved from <https://opto.ca/health-library/about-glaucoma>. Accessed October 13, 2021.

³ Fighting Blindness Canada. About Glaucoma. Retrieved from <https://www.fightingblindness.ca/eyehealth/eye-diseases/glaucoma/>. Accessed October 13, 2021.