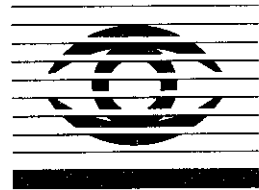




# saveOURSight



N·Z·A·O

NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION  
OF OPTOMETRISTS INC.

## **SAVE OUR SIGHT 2005**

### ***Introduction***

Welcome to Save Our Sight 2005 the public awareness campaign for eye health.

In each year since 2002, the New Zealand Association of Optometrists has headed a month-long eye health promotion campaign called *Save Our Sight*. The fact that regular eye examinations can save our sight is the simple key message.

The long term objectives of the campaign are to:

- Reduce preventable blindness.
- Raise awareness of threats to eye health.
- Promote the value of regular eye exams.
- Encourage the maintenance of sight for life.

### ***Aims of Save our Sight 2005***

- To communicate to New Zealanders that a regular eye examination by an optometrist can save their sight.
- To communicate to New Zealanders that eye health is an essential part of maintaining personal health and wellbeing.
- To promote eye health as an important public health issue for health planners within the categories of non-communicable disease and chronic illness.

## ***You don't know what you've got till it's gone!***

More than 60,000 New Zealanders age 40 and older have glaucoma. At least half do not know they have it. Untreated, glaucoma will cause loss of sight.

Twenty thousand New Zealanders have already lost sight due to Age Related Macular Degeneration (ARMD) and a further 2,000 are developing the disease each year. Smoking and dietary factors are related to the progression of the disease.

ACC processed more than 17,000 claims for eye injury accidents last year. US analysis of hospital treatments for eye injuries indicates that around 90% of all eye injuries are preventable.

13,200 New Zealand children are blind or have a sight impairment that cannot be corrected by glasses or contact lenses. Early detection and correction of sight problems in children is essential because development of the visual system is complete by the age of nine.

## ***Key Messages***

No matter what your age you need to have regular eye exams.

- If you are over 40 you should see the optometrist every 2-3 years.
- If you have diabetes or other health problems then you need to see your optometrist more often.
- If you have a family history of glaucoma then you need to think about having an eye exam every year.
- People over 65 are advised to see their optometrist every year.

**The Save our Sight campaign is led by the New Zealand Association of Optometrists, endorsed and supported by Retina New Zealand, Glaucoma New Zealand, Diabetes NZ, the Save Sight Society and the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmology.**

***The symbol of the Save our Sight campaign is the variegated Tulip. The variegated Tulip signifies "Beautiful Eyes".***

## **Timeframe**

The Save our Sight campaign runs for the month of August. Each week has its own theme. The themes for this year are:

- Week 1 (1-5 August) – **Eye Health for Life.** The focus is on the importance of protecting vision, from childhood to old age. Children's Eyecare Day is held during this week and around 200 – 300 needy children are provided with eye exams and glasses if needed courtesy of NZAO optometrists and our sponsors from the optical wholesale industry.
- Week 2 (8-12 August) - **Glaucoma Week.** During this week Glaucoma NZ is organizing a nationwide Mayoral glaucoma check. Mayors from many towns and cities will be attending clinics to have their eyes checked for glaucoma. Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of preventable blindness in the western world.
- Week 3 (15-19 August) - **Focus on the ageing eye.** Key conditions associated with loss of sight have a major impact on our ageing population. Awareness of threats to sight will be highlighted together with the need for good vision as a basis for independent living. Life-long protection of eye health is a key message.
- Week 4 (22-26 August) - **Eye Safety Week.** Focus on the alarmingly high rates of eye injury accidents and the need for prevention. Prof. Charles McGhee will publicise some of his findings from Auckland hospital. The use of protective eyewear at work and in DIY and gardening situations is an incredibly important message for optometrists to convey.

CALL THE NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS ON 04 473 2322  
OR WRITE TO US AT PO BOX 1978 WELLINGTON  
LOCAL CONTACT DETAILS ARE PRINTED BELOW