

Press release

29 September 2009

## **Through the eyes of babes**

*World Sight Day – 8 October 2009*

The recent Transitions Healthy Sight Survey<sup>1</sup>, released to coincide with World Sight Day (8 October 2009), has revealed that 48% of South Africans – whose children don't wear corrective glasses or contact lenses – have never had their children's eyes checked by an optometrist; a worrying figure as parents should be taking their children for an eye check at least once a year. On average, a child is exposed to three times more harmful UV rays than an adult and can have serious often irreversible, consequences on the eyes.

Although most parents are aware of the need to protect their children's skin from the sun, the potential damage the sun can have on the eyes is far less noted.

Acute UV exposure can cause photokeratitis and photoconjunctivitis, and exposure to UVB rays can lead to cataract development later in life. Although UV rays are dangerous for eyes young and old, children are especially susceptible to UV damage due to a number of contributing factors. The crystalline lenses in children's eyes are not fully developed and cannot adequately filter UV radiation. Well into their teenage years, children's eyes are most in danger of being damaged by harmful UV rays; the effects of which are usually only detected later on in life.

Early detection can help rectify or prevent eye conditions from worsening or causing permanent, irreversible damage. The World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends that children protect not only their skin but specifically recommends children wear sun-protective spectacles at all times.

Protecting children's eyes from UV rays today will minimise the risk of damage to their sight in future. "It's never too early to start looking after the well-being and health of your children's eyes," says Richard Pearson, Country Manager Transitions Optical South Africa. "Also, wearing corrective spectacle lenses from a young age could help reverse ones lens prescription over time<sup>2</sup> and protecting the eyes from harmful UV rays can help reduce the onset of age-related macular degeneration (AMD)."

## Healthy sight in every bite

Once upon a time your mother probably told you that the reason why rabbits have such good eye sight is because they eat carrots. She was talking more sense than you may think. The Transitions Healthy Sight Survey also revealed that the majority of South African parents (99%) know that carrots, spinach and salmon are good for their family's eyes but less than half (four out of 10) of respondents were aware that unhealthy eating habits can damage your eyes and exacerbate eye-related diseases. With childhood obesity on the increase worldwide, it is suggested that parents take more care what they are preparing for mealtimes.

"Systemic diseases such as diabetes and glaucoma – easily detected during a routine eye check – are no longer exclusively known as 'adult diseases'. More and more research is showing that unhealthy eating habits in children's formative years translates into physical, including visual, problems in their teenage and adult years. An eye test is about much more than just your vision," says Pearson.

To keep your family's eyes fit and healthy, pack your shopping trolley with healthy, nutritional foods. "Eye food' can be found in many types of fresh fruit, vegetables, nuts, legumes, seeds and seafood," adds Dr Nicky Welsh, ophthalmologist at Wits Donald Gordon Medical Centre. "What few consumers realise is that there is an abundance of food on supermarket shelves bursting with essential nutrients; all beneficial for the eyes. Soy beans, flaxseeds and salmon are crammed with anti-oxidants, carotenoids, minerals and vitamins."

*Transitions lenses® with Advanced Performance*, variable-tint lenses which are clear indoors and become sun lens dark when exposed to UV light, block 100% UV rays from reaching the eyes and reduce glare and reflection. Children love them because they seem to magically change from clear to sun lens dark right before your eyes.

*Transitions lenses® with Advanced Performance* can also be fitted to any designer children's frame making them a fashion must-have at any age.

Don't be blind to the facts. Protect your family from the inside out for a brighter, healthier future.

Log on to [www.transitions.co.za](http://www.transitions.co.za) for more information on eye health and eye care.

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### **Notes to the Editor**

- *Transitions® lenses with Advanced Performance*, the #1-recommended variable tint lenses worldwide, are a convenient and carefree way to enjoy healthy sight by protecting the eyes from glare and harmful UV rays, helping to improve the quality of your vision and the long-term health and well-being of your eyes. Indoors, outdoors, day or night; at work, play and everywhere in between, *Transitions® lenses with Advanced Performance* are convenient everyday lenses to help maintain and preserve your healthy sight.
- **Clarity & quick adjustment:** *Transitions® lenses with Advanced Performance* are as clear as regular clear lenses indoors and at night. They provide optimal clarity and indoor vision. *Transitions® lenses with Advanced Performance* activate and fade back very quickly.
- **Glare reduction improves the quality of your vision:** *Transitions® lenses with Advanced Performance* reduce glare, thus enhancing the quality of your vision and providing greater comfort. When you go outdoors, *Transitions® lenses with Advanced Performance* automatically darken in sunlight to reduce glare and quickly adjust their tint to changing light conditions. Glare can cause squinting, eye strain and eye fatigue. Glare can also cause blurred vision and visual discomfort. In daylight, glare can occur when walking indoors to outdoors, moving from shade to sunlight, or with light reflected off of surfaces like cars or pavements. Hence, *Transitions® lenses with Advanced Performance* help to see better every day and enjoy great vision.
- **UV protection helps to maintain healthy sight on the long term:** Like sun block protects your skin, *Transitions® lenses with Advanced Performance* also help take care of your sight for the future by continuously blocking 100% of UVA and UVB rays, helping to preserve the health and well-being of your eyes. UV rays are present all year round; even on cloudy days. Research indicates that the damage occurring over time from prolonged exposure to harmful UVA and UVB rays (damage from UV exposure is cumulative, building each and every time your eyes are exposed to the sun) may contribute to short-term vision impairment and potentially serious age-

related conditions or diseases of the eye, including some type of cataracts and macular degeneration.

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1. The Transitions Optical Healthy Sight Survey was conducted by world-renowned market research company Ipsos-Markinor in April 2008 and March 2009. One thousand South African respondents partook in each survey.
2. Results may vary from one individual to another.