

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**For more information:**  
Prevent Blindness America  
Sarah Hecker  
(312) 363-6035  
shecker@preventblindness.org

## **Risk for Cataract Increases with Age, but Other Factors Also Contribute**

***- Prevent Blindness America Provides Public with  
Free Resources to Educate on Leading Cause of Blindness-***

**CHICAGO (May 24, 2012)** – With age comes new health challenges, especially for vision. Today, more than 22 million Americans age 40 and older have cataract, a clouding of the eye's lens which blocks or changes the passage of light into the eye. According to the National Eye Institute, by age 80, more than half of all Americans will either have a cataract or have had cataract surgery.

Prevent Blindness America has declared June as Cataract Awareness Month and provides free information to the public on everything from cataract basics to tips on what to expect from cataract surgery through its dedicated web page at [preventblindness.org/cataract](http://preventblindness.org/cataract) or its toll free number at (800) 331-2020. And, as part of its new [Healthy Eyes Educational Series](#), PBA offers a specific online module on cataract including a presentation guide and Power Point presentation.

The risk of developing a cataract increases with age. Other possible risk factors include:

- Intense heat or long-term exposure to UV rays from the sun
- Certain diseases, such as diabetes
- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- Inflammation in the eye
- Hereditary influences
- Long-term steroid use
- Eye injuries
- Other eye diseases
- Smoking

Early symptoms of cataract may include cloudy or blurry vision. Lights may cause a glare, seem too dim or seem too bright. Patients may also find it difficult to read or drive, especially at night, or may have to change his or her eyeglass prescription often.

Unfortunately, there are no medications or other treatment options besides surgery to correct cataract. However, in the United States, cataract surgery has a 95 percent success rate, generally resulting with patient's vision of 20/20 to 20/40. And, it is the most frequently performed surgery, often performed as an outpatient procedure.

“By getting a complete, dilated eye exam, your doctor can discuss with you the best strategy to protect your vision well into the future,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “We encourage everyone, especially those ages 40 and older, to make their vision a priority by scheduling an eye appointment today.”

For free information on cataract in both English and Spanish, please call Prevent Blindness America at (800) 331-2020 or log on to [preventblindness.org/ataract](http://preventblindness.org/ataract).

### **About Prevent Blindness America**

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, Prevent Blindness America is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at [preventblindness.org](http://preventblindness.org) or [facebook.com/preventblindness](https://facebook.com/preventblindness).

###