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**Prevent Blindness Issues Five Things Women Need to Know About
Eye Health**

***-Prevent Blindness Declares April as Women's Eye Health and Safety
Awareness Month to Educate Public on Ways to Protect Vision-***

CHICAGO (March 23, 2016) – Data from the Prevent Blindness study, "[The Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of Vision Problems.](#)" found that women make up the majority of the 4.4 million Americans age 40 and older who are visually impaired or blind. Prevent Blindness has designated April as Women's Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month in an effort to educate women about their higher risk for vision loss as well as what they need to know about their eyes.

The following are five things women should know about vision and eye health:

1. More women than men are at risk for vision loss from eye diseases such as cataracts, glaucoma and macular degeneration. According to the [National Eye Institute](#), more than 3 million women and more than 1.5 million men have dry eye. Dry eye is more common after menopause and women who experience menopause prematurely are more likely to have eye surface damage from dry eye.
2. More women are caregivers- [Women often make the majority of their family's health care decisions](#). In addition to being responsible for their own health, women are often responsible as caregivers for the health care choices of their children, partners, spouses and aging parents. A woman making her vision health a priority positively impacts those around her, including those that depend on her care.
3. [Keeping a healthy lifestyle](#) also helps keep the eyes healthy, including exercising regularly, not smoking and following a healthy diet. Talk to a dietician about eating habits and a doctor before starting an exercise program. Make sure to always wear UV eye protection when outdoors.
4. [Pregnancy can cause vision changes](#) including refractive changes, dry eyes, and puffy eyelids. Expectant mothers may also experience vision effects from

migraine headaches, diabetes and high blood pressure. Glaucoma medications such as carbonic anhydrase inhibitors can be harmful to the developing baby. All pregnant women should discuss all medications and any changes in their vision immediately with their doctor.

5. Prevent Blindness recommends periodic dilated eye exams as the best way to ensure that vision is healthy and to help keep it that way. Additionally, [a dilated eye exam can also help detect other conditions](#) that affect overall health including high blood pressure or diabetes.

Prevent Blindness created the program, [See Jane See: Women's Healthy Eyes Now](#), to provide free education and resources on these topics and many more to help women better understand vision issues that are unique to them. The webpage also features a section written by leading experts on topics from eye safety to the importance of routine care.

To help support these efforts, [OCuSOFT® Inc.](#), a privately-held eye and skin care company dedicated to innovation in eyelid hygiene and ocular health, has agreed to donate 10 percent of all online sales during April's Women's Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month.

"Above all else, the most important message we want to send is that first step for everyone, no matter what age, is to get a complete eye exam by an eye care professional," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "By taking care of vision today, we can all help to keep vision healthy in the future."

For more information on women's eye health, including fact sheets on eye diseases, pregnancy and vision, as well as financial assistance, please visit www.preventblindness.org, www.SeeJaneSee.org, or call (800) 331-2020.

About Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness 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 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, Prevent Blindness 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 or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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