

Australians urged to consider World Sight Day as a reminder to prioritise vision, as insights reveal eye health neglect

October 2020: With the majority of Australians (76%) considering sight to be their most important sense, Optometry Australia is urging people to prioritise their eye health on Thursday 8 October for World Sight Day.

The call comes off the back of Optometry Australia's 2020 Vision Index, which revealed that more than a third (35%) of Australians do not undergo regular eye examinations, whilst an alarming 12% have never visited an optometrist.

With 90% of blindness and vision impairment avoidable or treatable if detected early, having routine eye examinations is increasingly important as a preventive technique.

Exploring attitudes, misconceptions and behaviours when it comes to eye health, the 2020 Vision Index found that over half of Australians (59%) worry about the quality of their eyesight, however often wait until something is obviously wrong before visiting the optometrist.

Optometry Australia's Chief Clinical Officer, Luke Arundel said "Many eye diseases show no obvious signs or symptoms and can sneak up silently, which is why it's vital Australians visit their optometrist regularly.

"During a routine eye examination, optometrists are able to uncover a range of eye conditions, including glaucoma and macular degeneration, which if undetected can lead to blindness."

The biggest motivators for visiting an optometrist included people citing poor long-distance vision (82%), poor short distance vision (81%), floating dots in vision (58%) and light sensitivity (47%).

The report also examined parents' attitudes towards their children's' eye health, revealing almost four in five parents believe their children have great eyesight, despite only 68% of Australian parents having taken their children to have their eyes examined.

Optometry Australia CEO Lyn Brodie said "With sight being considered the most important sense by the majority of Australians, it is essential for us all to prioritise our eye health.

"A visit to the optometrist is a simple step to ensuring good vision for life, with early detection critical to potentially saving sight or minimising vision loss."

Optometry Australia recommends regular eye examinations from just prior to starting school and then regularly every two to three years thereafter. Australians should visit an optometrist immediately if they notice changes in vision.

During the COVID-19 pandemic there are a range of consultation options available including tele-health and face-to-face consultations.

To find your local optometrist or for further information about Optometry Australia's 2020 Vision Index, visit www.goodvisionforlife.com.au.

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Optometry Australia is the peak professional body for optometrists. Representing eight out of every 10 Australian-based optometrists, Optometry Australia's focus is to lead and advance the profession of optometry by putting eye-health front and centre of Australian health care.