

Sugar And Sight: Something's Not Right

(NAPSA)—Did you know that if you have diabetes, you are at a higher risk of developing glaucoma, a potentially blinding eye disease? Experts are warning the approximately 17 million people with diabetes that they should take extra care of their eyes.

“Because the rate of diabetes is growing exponentially, we can anticipate that more and more people will develop common eye diseases associated with that condition,” said Eve Higginbotham, M.D., professor of Ophthalmology, chair, Department of Ophthalmology at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. “Awareness of common eye sight complications is crucial. Early diagnosis is critical in preventing vision loss. Treatments such as the prescription eye drop XALATAN® (latanoprost ophthalmic solution) can effectively lower eye pressure in patients with open-angle glaucoma.”

In the United States, diabetes is responsible for eight percent of patients who are legally blind. It is the leading cause of new cases of blindness in adults 20 to 74 years of age. Each year, between 12,000 to 24,000 people lose their sight because of diabetes. There are a number of common eye conditions associated with diabetes, including:

- Glaucoma—an eye disease with damage to the optic nerve which may be associated with an increase in fluid pressure within the eye

- Diabetic retinopathy—abnormalities of the small blood vessels of the retina caused by diabetes

- Cataracts—a clouding of the natural lens, the part of the eye responsible for focusing light and producing clear, sharp images.

Many people do not know they



have open-angle glaucoma and diabetes since symptoms may not always be apparent in the early stages. While screening and care could prevent up to 90 percent of diabetes-related blindness, only 60 percent of people with diabetes receive annual dilated eye exams.

Helpful eye-care health tips for diabetics:

- See your eye-care professional shortly after diagnosis of diabetes and annually thereafter for regular dilated eye exams

- Use all medications as directed by your doctor

- Report vision changes to your doctor immediately

- Learn and practice the skills necessary to better control blood glucose levels.

If you feel you may have glaucoma, cataracts or diabetic retinopathy, talk to your healthcare provider for more information. XALATAN is prescribed to lower eye pressure in patients with open-angle glaucoma or ocular hypertension when other eye pressure medicines are not effective enough or when a patient cannot tolerate other medicines.

For free information and helpful tips about glaucoma, visit the Web site www.glaucomainfo.com.