

# MEDIA RELEASE

## Australia’s eye doctors advise people with diabetes to check their eye health

13 July 2016

As part of National Diabetes Week (10–16 July) and the Eye Surgeons’ Foundation initiative JuleYE, Australia’s medical eye specialist doctors — ophthalmologists — are calling on people with diabetes to take extra care to look after their eye health.

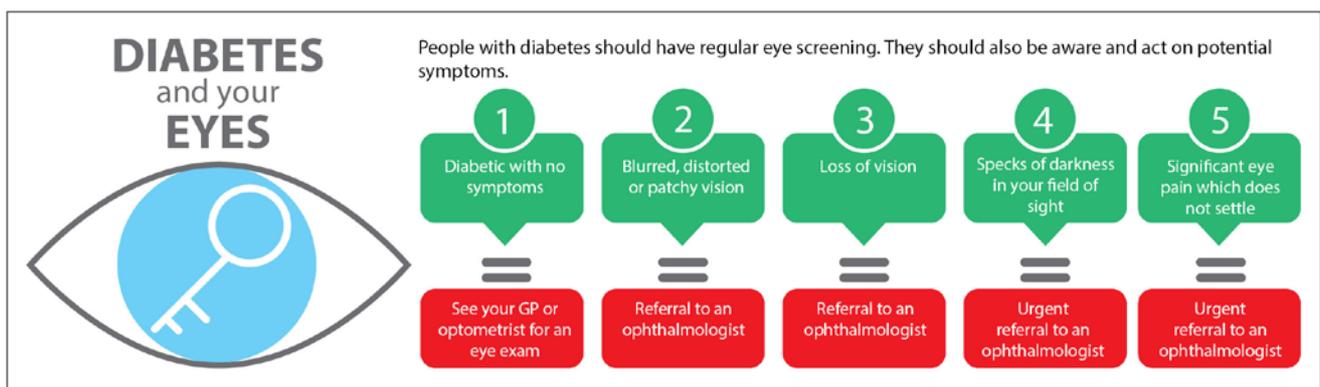
People with diabetes are at increased risk of serious eye conditions which can affect their sight and even cause blindness. Regular eye screening can help identify early signs of these conditions and enable early treatment to prevent eye damage. For this reason, The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) is reminding people with diabetes to have regular eye screenings, even if they have no visual loss or obvious symptoms.

RANZCO has also issued advice about severe eye health symptoms for people with diabetes and advised that people suffering from these conditions see their GP or optometrist for an eye screening and to ask about being referred to an ophthalmologist.

“Many people don’t know about the impact that diabetes can have on their eyes. People with diabetes may find that their eye sight changes, resulting in weaker or blurred sight, either permanently or temporarily,” explained Dr Diana Semmonds, ophthalmologist and RANZCO Board Member. “In fact, fluctuations or blurring of vision may be a sign that an undiagnosed person needs to be checked for diabetes. Regular eye screening can help to identify and manage these symptoms.”

“But there are also more permanent risks, such as diabetic retinopathy which can cause permanent vision loss due to damage to the blood vessels at the back of the eye,” continued Dr Semmonds. “People with diabetes also have increased risk of developing cataracts, which can cause blindness. The risk of developing these eye problems increases the longer you have had diabetes and when blood glucose levels are not properly controlled over a period of time. Being alert to potential symptoms really can save your sight.”

RANZCO is calling on people with diabetes to be on the lookout for early warning signs, stressing the importance of regular screening, which results in early diagnosis and prompt treatment, helping to prevent unnecessary blindness.



People with diabetes should have regular eye screening. They should also be aware and act on potential symptoms.

- Diabetic with no symptoms — see your GP or optometrist for a screening eye exam
- Blurred, distorted or patchy vision — referral to an ophthalmologist
- Loss of vision — referral to an ophthalmologist

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- Specks of darkness in your field of sight — urgent referral to an ophthalmologist
- Significant eye pain which does not settle — urgent referral to an ophthalmologist.

For more information about eye health, visit the RANZCO website at [www.ranzco.edu](http://www.ranzco.edu)

**For more information or to arrange an interview contact Emma Carr or Laura Sefaj at RANZCO on +61 426 842 121 and [media@ranzco.edu](mailto:media@ranzco.edu)**

## **About RANZCO**

The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists (RANZCO) is the professional body for ophthalmologists — eye doctors — in Australia and New Zealand. The College acts as the voice of the profession for its 1600 members and is responsible for the training, examining and professional development of Ophthalmologists. Our mission is to drive improvements in eye healthcare in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region through continuing exceptional training, education, research and advocacy.

## **About JulEYE**

**JulEYE** is the annual community awareness campaign undertaken by national not-for profit organisation The Eye Surgeons' Foundation during the month of July. JulEYE encourages Australians to look after their sight. For the first time in its nine year history, the JulEYE campaign is asking Australians to donate \$1 for every year of good sight they have enjoyed to fund vital medical eye research and help create a future where no-one is blind.