

# SEE YOUR DOCTOR

## Study: Eyedrops Can Help Cut Glaucoma Risk

(NAPSA)—Using your head may save your sight. Blindness may be a feared prospect for most, but it's a reality for more than 120,000 Americans with advanced glaucoma. Part of a family of eye diseases that gradually steal sight with little or no warning, glaucoma affects three million people in the United States. Only half of those affected actually know they have it.

Glaucoma occurs when fluid continuously produced by the eye accumulates due to improper drainage, putting pressure on the optic nerve which carries the "information" of vision to the brain. The high fluid pressure begins to kill the cells of the optic nerve, causing irreversible blind spots that can eventually lead to blindness. Ocular hypertension, often a precursor to glaucoma, affects an estimated three million to six million people.

Now, a new study by the National Eye Institute suggests that recognizing risk factors and starting treatment early may delay or even prevent the onset of glaucoma. The study, called the Ocular Hypertension Treatment (OHT) study, examined 1,636 patients with high intraocular pressure (IOP), the leading risk factor for development of glaucoma.

During the five-year trial, half of the patients received IOP-lowering medication, the other half were under observation without medical treatment.

"The results showed that without pressure-lowering treatment, patients were twice as likely to develop glaucoma, reinforcing the need for physicians to assess risks early and initiate treatment," said James Brandt, M.D. one of the study investigators and professor of ophthalmology and director of

### Are You at Risk for Glaucoma?

#### Common Risk Factors:

- **Age:** over 40
- **Family history:** glaucoma, diabetes and nearsightedness
- **Race:** African-Americans have four times the risk of developing glaucoma as compared to Americans of European descent
- **High Intraocular Pressure:** determined by physician



the glaucoma service at UC Davis.

According to Dr. Brandt, OHT study participants were given commercially available IOP-lowering eyedrops, including Lumigan (bimatoprost).

Unlike most IOP-lowering medications, Lumigan uses both of the eye's "drainage" routes to increase the outflow of excess fluid to reduce IOP. As a result, the drug has been shown to provide significantly greater IOP reduction than beta-blockers, setting a new mark for efficacy.

Lumigan has a favorable safety profile and is well tolerated by patients. The most frequently reported adverse events, occurring in approximately 15 to 45 percent of patients dosed once daily, in descending order of incidence, were conjunctival hyperemia, growth of eyelashes and ocular pruritus. Gradual eyelash growth (lengthening, darkening and thickening) and darkening of the eyelid skin were reported after treatment with Lumigan.

For more information about glaucoma or to find out what treatment is right for you, talk to your eyecare professional and visit [www.lumigan.com](http://www.lumigan.com).