

# EYE ON HEALTH

## Eye-Opening Facts About Glaucoma

(NAPS)—More than 2 million Americans have glaucoma, a progressive eye disease that can lead to blindness if left untreated, and millions more are at risk. Could you be one of them?

Regular eye check-ups improve the chances of early diagnosis, and appropriate treatment can help preserve vision and prevent further damage to the eye.

Glaucoma is a group of diseases that can cause permanent damage to the eye's optic nerve, which connects the eye to the brain, resulting in vision loss and blindness. Early on, glaucoma does not cause symptoms, leading some to call the disease the “sneak thief of sight.” By the time the vision loss caused by the disease becomes noticeable, irreversible damage has already been done.

“The only way to increase the chances of early diagnosis of glaucoma—before it causes vision loss—is with regular eye exams,” said James C. Tsai, M.D., Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science, Yale University School of Medicine. “Your eye doctor can perform simple tests that can detect high eye pressure, a risk factor for glaucoma, and can discuss other risk factors with you.”

While anyone can develop glaucoma, even if his or her eye pressure is within the normal range, certain characteristics increase the risk of developing the disease. If you are 45 years or older, have a family



**Glaucoma can be a devastating disease if left untreated and quick intervention and appropriate treatment under your eye doctor's care can help preserve your eyesight for years to come.**

history of glaucoma, have high eye pressure<sup>5</sup> (known as intraocular pressure) or are of African or Hispanic descent, you have a higher risk for developing glaucoma than people without these characteristics. The only one of these risk factors that can be controlled is high intraocular pressure.

“Lowering eye pressure in glaucoma's early stages with prescription medications offers the best chance of preserving vision,” said Dr. Tsai. “Eyedrops such as the prostaglandin analog latanoprost ophthalmic solution can help keep eye pressure under control. Some patients may also benefit from

laser therapy or surgery.”

Latanoprost ophthalmic solution, also known as Xalatan<sup>®</sup>, and other treatments can help people with glaucoma preserve their vision, but only if patients follow doctors' orders. Sticking with the regimen prescribed by your doctor is the best way to prevent the damage that glaucoma can cause to the optic nerve.

According to Dr. Tsai, research has uncovered a number of reasons people may not follow their prescribed treatment, despite the potential for these therapies to slow or halt the progression of glaucoma. It's important for people who have difficulties taking their medication as prescribed to talk to their doctor. Many doctors can provide tips to help overcome patients' difficulties adhering to a prescribed treatment regimen, such as ways to remember when they are supposed to apply their eyedrops or reminders to refill prescriptions.

For some, it becomes tough to stick with treatment because they have trouble administering their eye drops. But there are tools available that can help get the drop in the eye, such as the Xal-Ease<sup>™</sup> device, an easy-to-use applicator designed to help those who use Xalatan<sup>®</sup> (latanoprost ophthalmic solution) eyedrops.

For more information, full prescribing information for Xalatan or instructions for use for Xal-Ease, please visit [www.xalatan.com](http://www.xalatan.com) or call (866)398-8978.

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### Important Safety Information

*Like all medicines, XALATAN can have side effects. These side effects are usually mild and tolerable and may include blurred vision, burning and stinging, eye redness, the feeling of something in the eye, eye itching, increased pigmentation (darkening) of eye color, or irritation of the clear front surface of the eye.*

*XALATAN may slowly cause darkening of the eye color due to increased brown color, darkening of the eyelid and eyelashes, and increased growth and thickness of eyelashes. Color changes can increase as long as XALATAN is administered and eye color changes are likely to be permanent.*

*The recommended dosage is one drop (1.5 µg) in the affected eye(s) once daily in the evening. If one dose is missed, treatment should continue with the next dose as normal.*

*There have been reports of bacterial keratitis associated with the use of multiple-dose containers of topical ophthalmic products.*