

Eye on Health

World Keratoconus Day Aims to Increase Awareness About This Progressive Eye Disease

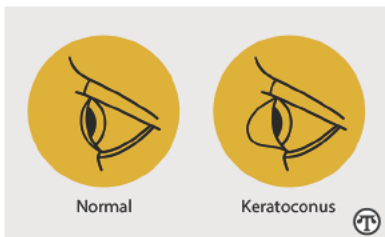
(NAPS)—Blurred vision, frequent eyeglass prescription changes, and even eye rubbing can be signs of an underdiagnosed progressive eye disease that can threaten vision, especially in teens and young adults. Keratoconus (KC) cannot be cured, but its progression can be slowed or halted with treatment. Awareness of KC, unfortunately, is extremely low, with nearly 70% of recent survey* respondents admitting they had never heard of the disease prior to being asked. World KC Day is November 10th, a global observance committed to raising awareness, educating, and advocating for people living with KC.

Keratoconus occurs when the cornea of the eye thins and weakens over time and a cone-like bulge forms which can distort vision. The reflexive act of rubbing your eyes can be both a cause and a symptom of KC; genetics can also be a factor. If left untreated, as many as 1 in 5 patients with progressive KC may eventually need a corneal transplant.

Additional results of the KC consumer awareness survey, conducted by Glaukos, include:

- The percentage of survey respondents who have experienced common symptoms of KC:
 - Excessive eye rubbing (including from allergies)—44%
 - Difficulty seeing at night—44%
 - Frequent headaches—30%
 - Mildly blurred vision—37%
 - Regular eyeglasses/contacts prescription changes—26%
- Nearly half of survey participants responded that vision difficulties have impacted their quality of life.
- 53% stated, with this new awareness of KC, they are definitely or likely to ask their eye doctor to check for KC, with nearly 70% saying they visit their eye doctor at least once a year.
- Only 38% of respondents say they typically ask their doctor if recommended treatments are approved by the FDA.

“As doctors, our main goal is to ensure our patients receive the best possible care for their eyes. We understand



KC occurs when the cornea thins, weakens, and a cone-like bulge forms and distorts vision.

that keratoconus can be a scary diagnosis, but with early detection and proper treatment, we can help patients maintain their vision and quality of life,” said Dr. Clark Chang, an optometrist at Wills Eye Hospital in Philadelphia and Director of Global Medical Affairs at Glaukos.

To generate consumer awareness of KC, Glaukos, developer of the only FDA-approved corneal cross-linking procedure for progressive KC, launched a multichannel awareness campaign earlier this year designed to educate consumers about the signs and symptoms of KC and encourage them to discuss these with their eye doctor.

“The KC awareness campaign is an opportunity to educate patients about keratoconus and the importance of regular eye exams. By working together, we can empower patients to take control of their eye health and provide them with the support they need to manage this condition,” Dr. Chang added.

The awareness campaign features a quiz that encourages patients to evaluate their current symptoms and can guide them to resources to seek treatment. Since its launch earlier this year, more than 175,000 people have visited the campaign website, nearly 30,000 have taken the quiz, and more than 5,000 have engaged to find a doctor. These numbers continue to increase each day.

* Glaukos conducted a survey of the U.S. general population using SurveyMonkey in June 2023. 1,037 people participated in the survey, ages 18 and above, evenly distributed between women and men.