Women's Eye Health Month

Women Are At A Higher Risk For Eye Disease

April was Women's Eye Health and Safety Month, but it's never too late take care of your vision. Two out of every three people living with blindness or vision problems are women, according to the National Eye Institute. And, data from The Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of Vision Problems study shows that women are at higher risk for certain eye diseases and conditions. Prevent Blindness has declared April as Women’s Eye Health and Safety Month in an effort to educate the public on the increased risk for women and vision health issues, as well as steps that can be taken to prevent vision loss.

Women have a higher prevalence of major vision problems, including:
- Age-related Macular Degeneration
- Autoimmune Diseases (such as Lupus or Sjögren’s Syndrome)
- Cataract
- Dry Eye
- Glaucoma
- Low Vision
- Thyroid Eye Disease
- Refractive Error

According to the World Health Organization’s World Report on Vision, women, on average, live longer than men, and are thus at greater risk of developing eye conditions associated with aging. However, even after controlling for age, global estimates suggest that women with moderate and severe presenting distance vision impairment outnumber men by approximately 7 percent. Gender and financial disparities can also create barriers to eye care access for women. A recent study published in JAMA Ophthalmology found that although women were more likely to use eye care, they are also more likely to report difficulty affording eyeglasses than men.

In addition to eye disease and conditions, women have unique health issues related to pregnancy and menopause due to fluctuating hormone levels. Women may notice changes in their ability to see clearly during pregnancy. Women with pre-existing conditions, like glaucoma, high blood pressure or diabetes, need to alert their eye doctor that they are pregnant (or planning to become pregnant). Additionally, dry eye leading to a clinical diagnosis or severe symptoms affects more than 3.2 million American women middle-aged and older.
As we continue to grow to better meet the needs of the community, we are thrilled to introduce our newest team member.

**Bryan Matamoros**

We are pleased and fortunate to welcome Bryan Matamoros to the FLLEC team. Bryan is an Ophthalmic Assistant and licensed Optician with 10 years of experience working in various clinics in Southwest Florida. He studied Opticianry at Hillsborough Community College and is a member of Professional Opticians of Florida.

"In the short time Bryan has been with us, he has jumped right into his role and is already a tremendous asset to the Clinic," said Olivia Peña, Clinic Supervisor. "His knowledge, professionalism and compassion for our patients makes him perfectly suited for our mission," she said. Bryan is wonderful with our young patients and even dressed up for the first Summer Children's Clinic on May 4th (as seen in this picture). Welcome to the team Bryan!

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**Summer Children's Eye Clinics**

The Florida Lions Eye Clinic will again offer our Summer Children's Eye Clinics on the first Wednesday of each month, May through August. The first Children's Clinic will be on Wednesday May 4th. Pediatric Ophthalmologist Dr. Shauna Berry will be available to perform examinations for the scheduled children on those days.

Experts say one in four school-aged children have undetected vision problems. If left untreated, some of these problems can cause permanent vision loss.

"The earlier we detect and treat vision problems in children, the easier they are to cure which allows them to do better in school and in life," said FLLEC
FLLEC Makes Grant Presentation to United Way

As you may know, the Florida Lions Eye Clinic is very proud to partner with the United Way of Lee, Hendry, and Glades Counties to provide services and support for those less fortunate in our communities. The United Way’s expertise in uniting the community, problem solving, and driving collective action to amplify the power of the individual helps us achieve things we could not do alone. Members of the Board and Executive team made their grant presentation to the United Way on Thursday April 28th. We specifically requested funding for a paid Ophthalmic Technician, a new surgical microscope, outside surgical funds, ongoing medical and supply costs, along with funding for patient transportation. 100% of what we do is funded by donations and grants. This request for funding from the United Way is instrumental in our efforts to continue providing no-cost eye health care to the underserved in our community. Thank you United Way for all you do!

FLLEC In The News

Our Marketing and Development department is always working to share the vision and efforts of the FLLEC with the community. We routinely send out Press Releases to the local broadcast and print media to try and get coverage for initiatives and events. Last month we were featured in both the Naples Daily News and the Florida Weekly. Click the links below to read the articles.

- Naples Daily News Article
- Florida Weekly Article

Calling All Volunteers!

As the need for the services the Florida Lions Eye Clinic provides to the community, so does our need for volunteers. We welcome anyone in the community who would like to volunteer their time to help us at the clinic and at events in the community. We are also looking for volunteer physicians in the area who are willing to donate their time and services at the clinic or at their practices. If you are interested in helping us meet the needs of those most vulnerable in Southwest Florida, or if you know someone who might be willing to help, please visit our website or give us a call at (239) 498-3937 for more information on how you can be part of our cause.

Visit our Website
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