

MEDIA RELEASE

June 2016

Cecily is feeling charitable towards Glaucoma New Zealand!

Cantabrian Celia Allison, the creator of the popular Cecily cartoon character, is joining forces with Glaucoma New Zealand for the charity's annual appeal month.

Throughout July for every order at www.cecily.co.nz that uses the code **Glaucoma NZ** – 50% of the sale will be donated to Glaucoma New Zealand. The website sells cards, stationery, prints, tea towels, lens cloths and more.

Celia is also looking at creating a limited edition lens cloth for Glaucoma New Zealand.

While she has no family history of glaucoma herself, Celia has worn glasses since the age of five, and undergone laser procedures over the years. Losing her sight would mean an end to her love of visual mediums and, of course, Cecily.

Her husband, George, has a family history of glaucoma: his 82-year-old mother had to give up her driver's licence this year due to deteriorating vision. Having a family history of glaucoma increases your risk of developing this disease and it means you need to have your vision checked more often.

If you have glaucoma, it will be more difficult to understand Cecily's jokes...



Cecily cleared her vision hoping her mind would follow suit.



But all jokes aside, Celia says glaucoma is very close to home and, it's a debilitating disease.

If you are keen to buy from Celia's website at www.cecily.co.nz and donate to Glaucoma New Zealand, be sure to enter the code **Glaucoma NZ** in the special instruction box when you see "Your cart".

Donations can be via Glaucoma New Zealand's website <http://www.glaucoma.org.nz> or by visiting your nearest ASB Bank branch during July to help Glaucoma New Zealand continue its work. Participating optometrists, ophthalmologists and pharmacies will also have Glaucoma NZ collection boxes in July.

ENDS

About Glaucoma New Zealand and glaucoma

Glaucoma is a disease that progresses without you being aware that anything is wrong; you can be legally blind before you notice the symptoms. When you have glaucoma, your optic nerve fibres progressively die, taking away the peripheral (side vision) first. Visual loss goes undetected until it is quite advanced.

Glaucoma New Zealand, a charitable trust, offers services to everyone affected by and concerned with glaucoma; providing education and support to both the public and health professionals, as well as contributing to research.

Glaucoma New Zealand recommends an eye examination for glaucoma every five years from the age of 45 and every three years from the age of 60. However, at any age, if you notice changes in your eyesight, then you should have your eyes examined at that time.

About 91,000 New Zealanders (2% of the population) over the age of 40¹ have glaucoma and more than half don't know they have it. That means there is a very real possibility they will go completely blind. By the time you are 70 years old, your chances of having glaucoma are one in ten.

"Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness. What makes glaucoma unique is that if glaucoma is diagnosed early and treatment started in a timely fashion, blindness becomes rare," Professor Helen Danesh-Meyer, Chair of Glaucoma New Zealand says.

"A diagnosis of glaucoma has profound impact on patients," Professor Danesh-Meyer says.

"Patients with glaucoma are more likely to experience falls and injure themselves and have difficulty adjusting their vision to dim light (such as dusk and dawn). Glaucoma patients are also more likely to be involved in motor vehicle accidents. Losing the ability to drive has a profound impact on quality of life and independence."

Worldwide 4.5% of the population has glaucoma – 64 million people – and that's expected to grow to 111.8 million worldwide by 2040².

¹ [Ministry of Health/Healthline 2014](#)

² [Ophthalmology. 2014 Nov;121\(11\):2081-90. doi: 10.1016/j.ophtha.2014.05.013. Epub 2014 Jun 26.](#)

Further comment:

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