



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## MEDIA STATEMENT

**To:** Editors & Health Journalists  
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### World Optometry Day – 23 March

**Pretoria:** The Department of Health joins the global community to commemorate World Optometry Day to raise awareness about the importance of routine eye examinations, early detection of eye diseases, and prevention of blindness through proper eye care.

This day also recognizes the work and contributions of optometrists as eye health professionals who examine, diagnose, and manage eye problems and various eye diseases through comprehensive eye tests.

This year's World Optometry Day is commemorated under the theme: "**A Shared Vision: Collaboration in Global Eye Care**", which highlights the necessity of collaboration across the health system to meet growing global vision needs, aligned with the World Health Organization's focus on accessible eye care.

The Department urges the public to go for regular eye examinations, not just for vision correction, but for early detection and effective management of eye conditions like cataracts, glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration (AMD) before they cause permanent vision loss or blindness.

Optometrists remain essential healthcare professionals who provide comprehensive eye care, diagnosis, treatment, and management of eye diseases. Your eyes remain an important part of your health.

Some of the common symptoms of eye problems include blurred vision, redness, persistent pain, light sensitivity, itching, and floaters. Controlling blood sugar levels is key to preventing diabetic retinopathy, a serious diabetes complication mainly caused by high blood sugar with the potential to damage retinal blood vessels, leading to vision loss.

Other risk factors contributing to eye problems include smoking, poor diet, lack of regular physical activity, not wearing sunglasses. Exercise and a healthy diet help control blood pressure, blood sugar and reduces risk factors associated with vision loss.

### For more information and media enquiries, please contact:

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