



**PRESS RELEASE**

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## **The easy and simple test you can do to check for diabetes**

Diabetes is a serious condition which can damage the heart, kidneys, eyes and feet if left untreated. Often, people with diabetes don't get any symptoms which means it can take up to 10 years before they are diagnosed<sup>1</sup>. But there is an easy test that almost everyone already does, which can check for the condition – an eye examination

Those suffering with diabetes are up to 20 times more likely to lose their sight than those without the condition<sup>2</sup>. However, only one in five adults are aware that their optician can detect the signs<sup>3</sup>. That is why, this Diabetes Awareness Week (June 10-16), Specsavers is highlighting the importance of having regular eye tests.

Dr Nigel Best, Specsavers clinical spokesperson, says: 'An estimated 1 million people in the UK<sup>4</sup> are living with diabetes without even realising it – meaning they're at huge risk of developing serious eye health complications and even sight loss.

'Diabetes is one of the fastest growing health conditions today – fuelled by record levels of obesity, excessive sugar consumption and sedentary lifestyles. If we continue to turn a blind eye to the risk of developing type 2 diabetes as a result, we can only expect to see the number of undiagnosed cases escalate.'

A complication of diabetes is diabetic retinopathy where high blood sugar levels can damage the blood vessels in the back of the eye. If left untreated it can cause blindness.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.diabetes.org.uk/diabetes-the-basics/what-is-type-2-diabetes>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.diabetes.org.uk/resources-s3/2017-11/diabetes\\_in\\_the\\_uk\\_2010.pdf](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/resources-s3/2017-11/diabetes_in_the_uk_2010.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> State of the Nation's Eye Health, Specsavers/ RNIB 2016 <http://www.rnib.org.uk/knowledge-and-research-hub-research-reports/prevention-sight-loss/stateofthenation>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about\\_us/news/diabetes-prevalence-statistics](https://www.diabetes.org.uk/about_us/news/diabetes-prevalence-statistics)

Dr Best adds: ‘Diabetic retinopathy is one of the leading causes of blindness among people of working age in the UK<sup>5</sup> so it’s hugely important that diabetes is detected early and monitored correctly to avoid furthering the risks.

‘At Specsavers, we offer digital retinal photography for free as part of a standard eye test for customers aged over 40. This takes a detailed picture of the back of your eye and the microcirculation of blood – helping to highlight indicators of diabetes that need addressing and monitoring.’

Specsavers recommends everyone should get an eye test once every two years and those over 55 should get their hearing checked once a year. For further information or to book an appointment visit: <https://www.specsavers.co.uk/>

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Issued by Beattie Communications on behalf of Specsavers.

[specsavers.com](https://www.specsavers.com)



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### **Notes to Editors**

- Specsavers is a partnership of almost 2,000 locally-run businesses throughout the world -all committed to delivering high quality, affordable optical and hearing care in the communities they serve.
- Each store is part-owned and managed by its own joint venture partners who are supported by key specialists in support offices
- More than 36 million customers are registered with Specsavers and the partnership had a turnover of more than £2.6bn in 2017/18
- More than one in three people who wear glasses in the UK buy them from Specsavers
- Specsavers is a champion of the National Health Service – of its 22.2m customers in the UK, 55% are from the NHS and the company is the largest provider of free NHS digital hearing aids
- Specsavers supports several UK charities and is in partnership with RNIB for a public awareness campaign to transform the nation’s eye health.
- Specsavers runs a home-visiting service in the UK and Ireland for those who cannot get to their local store unaccompanied.

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/RNIB\\_evidence\\_based\\_review\\_of\\_working\\_age\\_people.pdf](http://www.rnib.org.uk/sites/default/files/RNIB_evidence_based_review_of_working_age_people.pdf)