

**Female Baby Boomers at Greatest Risk of Developing Computer Vision Syndrome
Prolonged Use of Digital Screens Causing Havoc on Canadians Eye Health**

Ottawa, Ontario – September 2, 2009 – Computers, cell phones and Blackberries may provide modern conveniences, however prolonged use of digital screens is affecting the eye and vision health of Canadians. The average user of these technological conveniences is not just children or young adults. A new survey conducted by Leger Marketing indicates that on average, Canadian baby boomers are spending 7 ½ hours daily in front of potentially eye-straining devices such as, computers, televisions, cell phones or Blackberries.

And while technologies have evolved and changed the way people communicate and function in their daily lives, female baby boomers are reporting higher usage of these eye-straining devices. “As a result, they are reporting more eye and vision ailments associated with high screen time than male baby boomers,” says Dr. Kirsten North, President, Canadian Association of Optometrists.

Canadian optometrists use Computer Vision Syndrome or CVS, to describe various eye and vision symptoms associated with prolonged computer and other digital screen use. Canadian optometrists see a range of symptoms associated with CVS including eye strain and fatigue, dry and irritated eyes, blurry vision and photophobia –an oversensitivity to light. The majority of people may not even realize they have this condition.

- Canadian optometrists are seeing a higher volume of patients complaining of symptoms linked to computer vision syndrome compared to five years ago.
- 40 per cent of baby boomer patients aged 45 to 54 are associating their eye and vision complaints with prolonged screen time. This is higher than other age groups.

Eye and vision health conditions do not always come with recognizable symptoms and can go undetected. The Canadian Association of Optometrists encourages routine, comprehensive eye exams to help detect, minimize and treat symptoms associated with computer vision syndrome. “Be kind to your eyes and visit your optometrist regularly to minimize eye strain and prevent lasting damage to your eyes” says Dr. North. For more information on eye health guidelines and to find an optometrist in your area, visit www.opto.ca.

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