**News Release**

**Contact:**

INSERT CONTACT NAME
INSERT CONTACT PHONE NUMBER
INSERT CONTACT EMAIL

**What Do Christie Brinkley and Bono Have in Common?**

*A regular eye screening saved both from significant vision loss due to glaucoma*

<INSERT CITY, STATE>– [INSERT DATE] – Both supermodel Christie Brinkley and Bono, the lead singer of U2, were diagnosed with glaucoma during a routine eye exam. Both were also surprised by the diagnosis since they weren’t experiencing problems with their vision. That’s the sinister nature of [glaucoma](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-glaucoma), one of the leading causes of blindness worldwide: People with glaucoma can lose most of their vision before they experience [symptoms](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/glaucoma-symptoms). Once vision is lost, it cannot be regained. That’s why [INSERT ORGANIZATION NAME] and the [American Academy of Ophthalmology](https://www.aao.org/) is urging people to get [regular eye screenings](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/eye-exams-101) to protect their good vision.

Glaucoma is a group of diseases that damages the eye’s optic nerve. The optic nerve transmits visual information to the brain, allowing us to see. Because glaucoma often progresses slowly, affecting just peripheral or side vision, people with glaucoma can suffer significant vision loss before they notice a problem or a change in their vision. Central vision, the vision used to read, drive or watch TV, is usually unaffected until the disease is advanced.

The experience of both celebrities also serves as a reminder that glaucoma doesn’t have to mean blindness. If caught early, [glaucoma can be treated](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-is-glaucoma) with medicated [eye drops](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/glaucoma-eyedrop-medicine) or laser treatments.

**“**It may seem harmless to skip a routine eye exam if you don’t notice any vision changes, but glaucoma, as well as some other eye conditions, can cause vision loss without any warning signs,” said Dianna Seldomridge, M.D., clinical spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. “Even though ophthalmologists have several effective treatment options, the best protection against vision loss from glaucoma is an early diagnosis.”

[INSERT YOUR SPOKESPERSON’S QUOTE HERE]

The American Academy of Ophthalmology [recommends](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/eye-exams-101) all healthy adults get a comprehensive eye exam by age 40 to screen for blinding eye diseases. If eye disease runs in [your family](https://www.aao.org/eye-health/tips-prevention/family-reunions), you should see an ophthalmologist as soon as possible if you haven’t already.

Here’s who’s most at risk of a glaucoma diagnosis:

* African Americans. They are 6 to 8 times more likely to get glaucoma than white Americans. Blindness from glaucoma is 6 to 8 times more common in African Americans than white Americans.
* Hispanic Americans. This group faces an increased risk comparable to African Americans, and the disease may also progress faster as they age, compared with other ethnic groups.
* Asians. Being of Asian descent increases the risk for the less common types of glaucoma: angle-closure glaucoma and normal-tension glaucoma.
* Those people with a family history of glaucoma.
* People with diabetes. Glaucoma is 2 times more in people with diabetes than people without diabetes.
* People who are very nearsighted.
* Anyone over age 40 is at risk and should be screened.

For more information about eye health and how to protect your eyes, visit the Academy’s EyeSmart [website](https://www.aao.org/eye-health).

**Some Seniors May Be Eligible for Glaucoma Screening**

For individuals age 65 or older who are concerned about their risk of eye disease, you may be eligible for a medical eye exam, often at no out-of-pocket cost, through the American Academy of Ophthalmology’s EyeCare America®program. For those at increased risk for glaucoma, they may qualify for a glaucoma exam through EyeCare America. This public service program matches volunteer ophthalmologists with eligible patients in need of eye care across the United States. To see if you or a loved one qualifies, visit [EyeCare America](https://www.aao.org/eyecare-america) to determine your eligibility. EyeCare America is co-sponsored by the Knights Templar Eye Foundation Inc., with additional support provided by Alcon.

**Medicare provides an annual dilated eye exam for Medicare beneficiaries over age 65 at high risk for glaucoma.**Those eligible for this service are people with diabetes, family history of glaucoma or African Americans over 50. To learn more, call 800-633-4227.

**About the American Academy of Ophthalmology**The Academy is the world’s largest association of eye physicians and surgeons. A global community of 32,000 medical doctors, it protects sight and empowers lives by setting the standards for ophthalmic education and advocating for its patients and the public. The Academy innovates to advance the profession and to ensure the delivery of the highest-quality eye care. Through its EyeSmart® articles on AAO.org, the Academy provides the public with the most trusted information about eye health. For more information, visit [aao.org](http://www.aao.org/).