

NEVER MISS THE WONDER

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) Awareness Week 2016

Image by Cathal Curran

AMD
AWARENESS
WEEK

19th – 25th September 2016

www.AMD.ie

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Foreword

Now in its ninth year, Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) Awareness Week is a national campaign to raise awareness of an eye condition that is the leading cause of sight loss for those aged over 50 in Ireland (1). This annual event is supported by Fighting Blindness, NCBI - the national sight loss organisation, the Irish College of Ophthalmologists (ICO) and the Association of Optometrists Ireland (AOI), together with Novartis Ireland.

The aim of the campaign is to improve knowledge and understanding of what Age-Related Macular Degeneration is, so it can be diagnosed as early as possible and treated appropriately, to help preserve healthy eyesight.

By running an awareness campaign, with free AMD testing across the country, we hope to generate a conversation that reaches both over 50s and their friends and family. By generating more conversation about AMD, we hope to highlight the importance of regular eye testing, as well as the benefits of early diagnosis and treatment.

This year’s campaign theme is **‘Never Miss the Wonder’**. We all have emotions connected with images in our mind or a

photograph at home, on our phone or our computer. We visit friends, family, places either nearby or far flung and experience excitement, joy, love and wonder as a result. We invited you to share your ‘wonder’ with us, to highlight just how important our sense of sight is and how looking after our eyesight can make a big difference to our quality of life.

It was not easy to select the winning photographs which are reproduced in this booklet. Our winner and finalists join some of our long-term supporters of AMD Awareness Week, including RTE presenter Mary Kennedy, Met Eireann and RTE weather presenter, Evelyn Cusack, award winning and best-selling authors Sheila O’Flanagan and Sinead Moriarty, in sharing their wonder. We hope you enjoy this collection of images and that they bring a little more wonder to your life today.

If we ask one thing, it is that you look after your eyesight and have regular AMD eye testing to allow for early identification of any problems. Talk to your friends and family about this campaign and visit www.amd.ie for more information.

Thank you.





Our two dogs, Larry and Daisy. They are loved by us all, really cute. As thick as thieves, although it wasn't always thus! I love this photo for its cuteness factor!!



Mary Kennedy, RTE Broadcaster



I really love flowers. This arrangement is particularly beautiful I think because it was designed to commemorate the centenary of 1916 with its green white and orange tones. The intricate beauty of flowers is something I admire and cherish.



This is the Donegal coastline near Sliabh League. I love the majesty of cliffs and the fluidity of the sea.



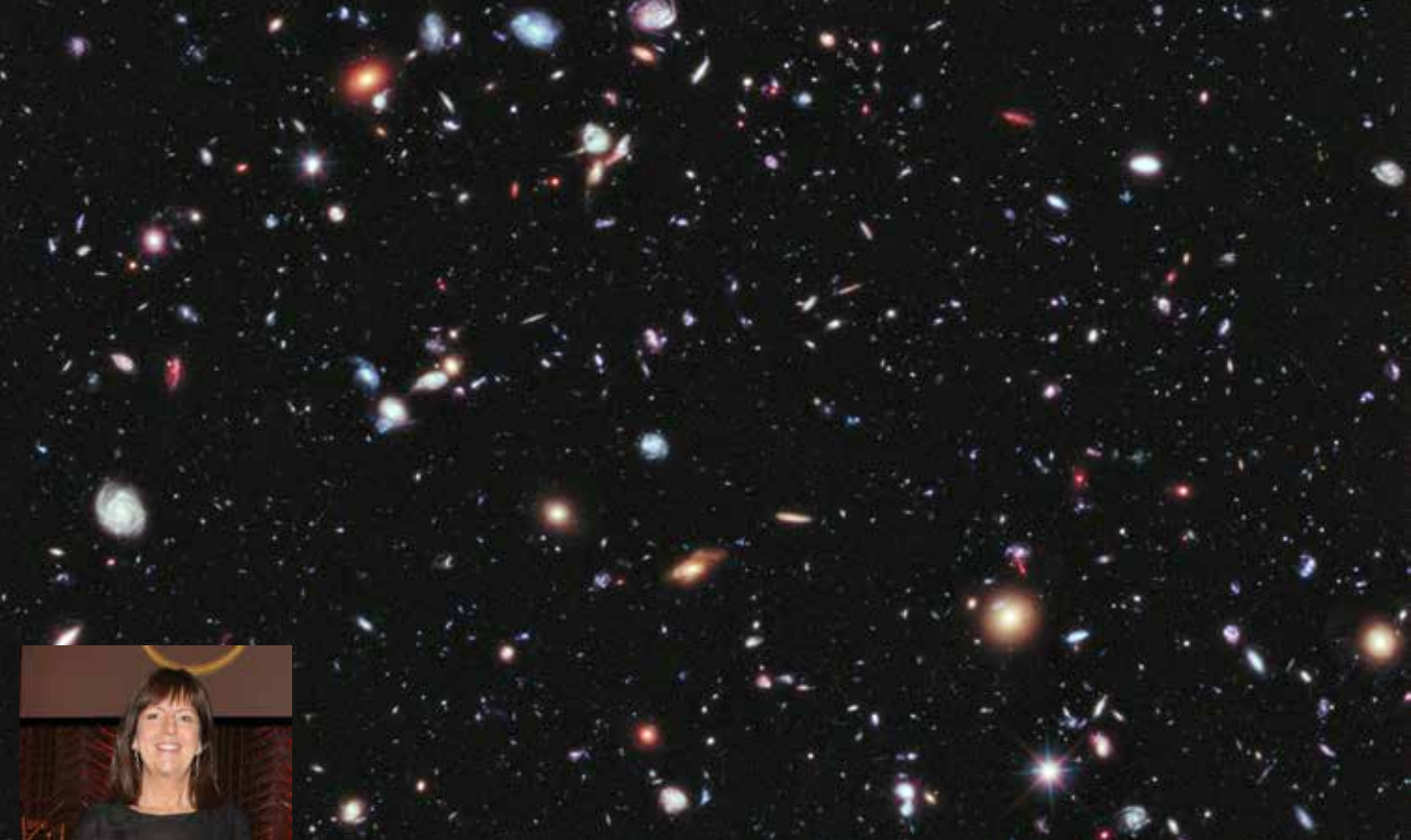
Sheila O'Flanagan, Best-selling author

My wonder is a photograph of my mum in her first job and I love it because she's so happy and optimistic and interested in having a career which was very unusual in 1950s Ireland. I like seeing my mum as a person and not just my mother.



Sinead Moriarty, Best-selling author

This is a photo I took when on a wonderful trip to visit a fellow writer and friend in Bergen in Norway. I was blown away by the light in Norway. It feels as if you are looking at everything through a bright window. The light is so dazzling and pure and utterly breathtaking.



Evelyn Cusack,
Deputy Head of Forecasting at Met Éireann and RTE weather presenter

This picture is known as the Hubble Ultra Deep Field image, 2014 and is a composite of exposures taken from a tiny 'dark' area of the southern sky by the Hubble Space Telescope.

The coloured objects are galaxies and each galaxy contains as much as 200 billion stars. It has helped us estimate that there are at least 100 billion galaxies in our observable universe. The light from our star (we call it the Sun) takes eight minutes

to get to Earth....some of these Galaxies are so far away that their light has taken over 13 billion years to reach us...almost back in time to the Big Bang, when we think our Universe started.

This image continues to astound us and teach us about the origin of the Universe and ourselves. One lesson we can learn from it is how special and unique each one of us is and how wondrous it is that we exist at all.

What is Age-Related Macular Degeneration?

Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD) is the leading cause of sight loss in Ireland – almost 100,000 people throughout the country have AMD (2), with 7,000 new cases diagnosed each year in the over 50 population. (1)

As the symptoms of AMD can often go unrecognised, it is crucial that people aged over 50 get their eyes tested regularly so that if there are any signs of AMD it can be diagnosed and treated as early as possible.

AMD affects the macula at the back of the eye, which is responsible for central vision and allows you to see detail.

People living with this condition will often notice a blank patch or blurred dark spot in the center of their sight. This makes activities like reading, writing and recognising small objects or faces very difficult. AMD usually starts in one eye and is likely to affect the other eye at a later stage.



Normal Vision



Vision distortion due to wet AMD



Late stage vision due to wet AMD

Dry and Wet AMD:

There are two types of AMD: dry and wet. Dry AMD is the most common (80-90%) and also the mildest form of the condition (3). In this type there are typical age changes such as age spots or ‘Drusen’ in the macula. Very often patients with Dry AMD maintain good central vision, needing perhaps more magnification and lighting for reading. A small percentage of patients with Dry AMD will develop

more severe dry changes with consequential progressive difficulty with reading and fine vision. At this time there is no known cure for Dry AMD, but progression can be slowed by stopping smoking, eating a healthy diet rich in Lutein (found in the leafy green vegetables), and looking after cardiovascular risk factors such as high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol. Dry AMD usually affects both eyes. Dry AMD can progress to Wet AMD. Wet AMD is caused by leaky blood vessels inside the eye. It is less common than dry AMD but it can cause more rapid loss of vision. It is responsible for 90% of the cases of severe vision loss (4). It results in new, weak blood vessels growing behind the retina (5). The good news is that while wet AMD can develop quickly in the majority of cases, if diagnosed and treated early, as much sight as possible can be saved and some people may even see an improvement in their eyesight (6).

What early symptoms should I be aware of?

The most common symptom of AMD is slightly blurred vision. Wavy lines or a blind spot in the center of the field of vision are other symptoms. If you notice any change in your vision, see an eye care professional immediately, especially if there is a history of glaucoma, AMD or diabetes in your family.

What can I do to protect my vision?

While wet AMD cannot necessarily be prevented, there is treatment available and its onset can be delayed by making some lifestyle changes and by ensuring that you have your eyes examined regularly.

- Stop smoking straight away to decrease your chances of developing AMD
- Eat a healthy diet, rich in fruit and vegetables
- See an eye doctor or an optometrist immediately if you notice any changes in your vision
- Have a thorough eye exam every two years

AMD is a progressive disease and it is also painless. While AMD may affect your detailed central vision, most people still retain side (or peripheral) vision. However, if left untreated, 17% of people will progress to advanced AMD within five years (7).



Never Miss the Wonder – Your wonders

Winner Cathal Curran, Co. Kerry

My son Cathal took this photo at 16 years of age. My mother has AMD for the past 15 years. She is now 87 years old and is visually impaired. She is not totally blind but has very limited sight which has caused her all sorts of anxiety and trauma over the years. She loved life. She loved reading the paper as she never had a keen interest in TV. She loved the outdoor life. To me, this photograph shows the beauty of the beach, where she used to visit and still does, but now sees it in a different light. Shown through the crystal ball, this image reminds me of the overall effect that AMD can have on one's vision. This photograph is almost the opposite to what happens with AMD. It sums up that we should never miss the wonder, the wonder of our sight. Submitted by Catherine Curran.



AMD stands for Age-Related Macular Degeneration. AMD is the leading cause of sight loss for the over 50s in Ireland (I). Through the **‘Never Miss the Wonder’** campaign, we aim to highlight the importance of regular eye testing, as well as the benefits of early diagnosis and treatment for AMD.

Runner up

Clodagh Watkins, Co. Meath

My wonder is my little boy Jack. He has had over seven eye operations and unfortunately lost the sight in one of his eyes at the age of 3. He is now 4 but nothing fazes him. He is on 15 drops a day at the minute due to having a cataract operation on his remaining eye two weeks ago. He never cries at any check-up or while staying in hospital. This picture was taken in Navan shopping center where we met a lovely man (Pierce) and his dog (Henry). Jack saw them before me and said **“Mammy that dog is that man’s eyes”**. He is an amazing little boy and we are so, so proud of him.



Runner up

Susan Lawler, Co. Dublin

To see the simple things in life - like your children - is the most precious thing.



Sabrina O'Brien,
Co. Kilkenny

A wet Summer's day in August of this year was spent exploring beautiful Wicklow with my family. At one point we couldn't see in front of us for the rain but it soon cleared up and I caught my brother checking out the sights around Wicklow Gap. The beauty and wonder of the Irish landscape never disappoint.

Gareth O'Brien,
Co. Kildare

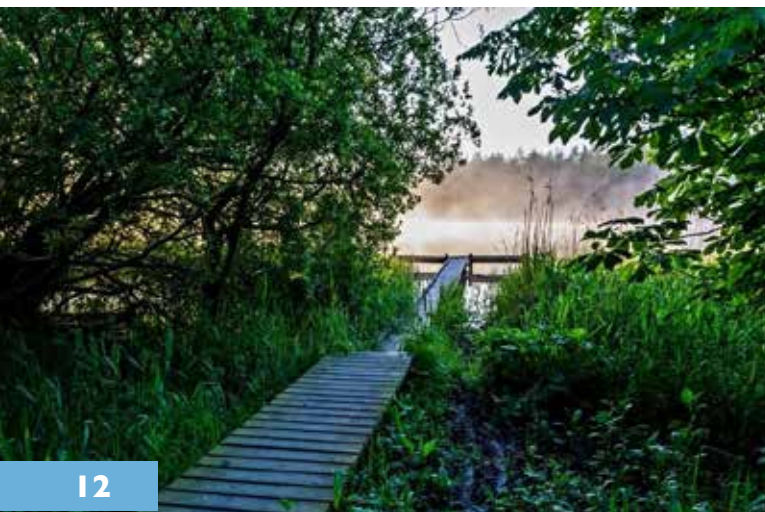
This is a photo taken from the banks of the River Slaney in Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford. This area is a wonder to me because as a child I spent many an hour fishing from these banks and now that I am a father, I have brought my son fishing to the same spot on weekends when visiting family still living in Enniscorthy.





Oliver Gargan, Co. Cavan

I'm 28 years old and live in the beautiful picturesque town of Bailieborough. We are blessed with such natural beauty all around us, that we sometimes take it for granted. I like to show it at its best and see the wonder of Ireland. I bought my first Nikon dslr in late 2013 and have been photographing ever since. All my photos have been taken at the town lake and castle lake in Bailieborough County Cavan and around the outskirts of Bailieborough County Cavan.



Ray Mullen, Co.Dublin

A photo of some Fallow deer in the Phoenix park. You don't have to go to the countryside to see the wonder of nature on your doorstep. Just a bus ride away and slap bang in the middle of the city you can be right up close with nature.

Susanne Grampe, Co.Dublin

My name is Susanne and I am visually impaired, I suffer from hereditary optic atrophy. Last year, I gave up my job in Switzerland to move (again) to Ireland as I love to be by the sea. I often think that people look for wonders elsewhere and in doing so fail to see the things directly in front of them. I took the attached photograph on a walk up Killiney Hill and to me, it captures the lovely day and peaceful atmosphere. That was my wonder on that day.





Gerry McLoughlin, Co. Roscommon

I wonder if everyone can see the faces
in the clouds?



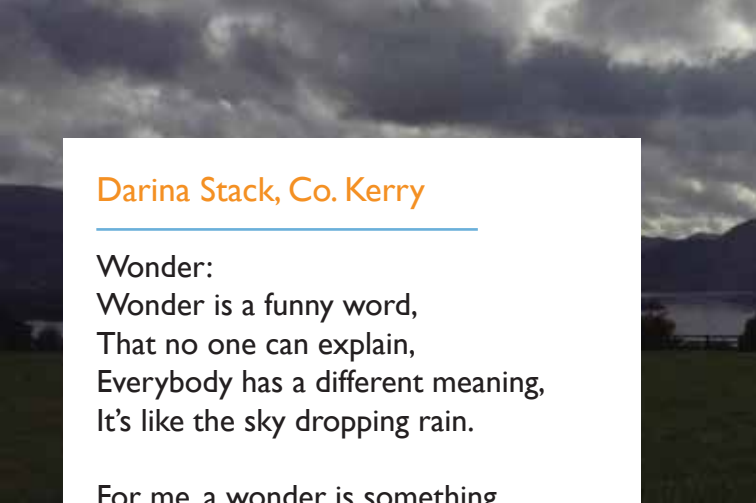
Joan Murray, Co. Meath

I took this photo in early August in my garden
of this Peacock Butterfly on the lovely purple
butterfly bush! I took the picture by holding the
phone way above my head! I was so delighted
with the picture I got and in wonder of the
beautiful nature that surrounds me! My Mam
has AMD and thankfully due to early diagnosis
is still able to enjoy life and keep up with her
gardening!!



George Connor, Co Waterford

Just to be able to see things like a bee collecting
pollen off one of my pot marigolds.



Darina Stack, Co. Kerry

Wonder:
Wonder is a funny word,
That no one can explain,
Everybody has a different meaning,
It's like the sky dropping rain.

For me, a wonder is something,
That cannot be seen or touched,
It is something that is there,
Something for everyone to share.
The wonder of not knowing,
What's going to happen next,
Or to wonder if something is really true,
Or is it just putting you through a test?
The whole world is full of wonder,
It's everywhere we turn,
To wonder what will happen next,
And be good or bad in return?
Some spend their whole lives wondering,



What life is even about,
To wonder is only a small part,
To keep us from backing out.
I will never stop wondering,
Which way life will turn out,
I will never keep myself pondering,
On why it didn't work out.

For me, this picture of wonder,
Shows that the whole world is yours,
Even if things fall a sunder,
To wonder is one of life's best cures.

Bernie O Connor,
Co Dublin

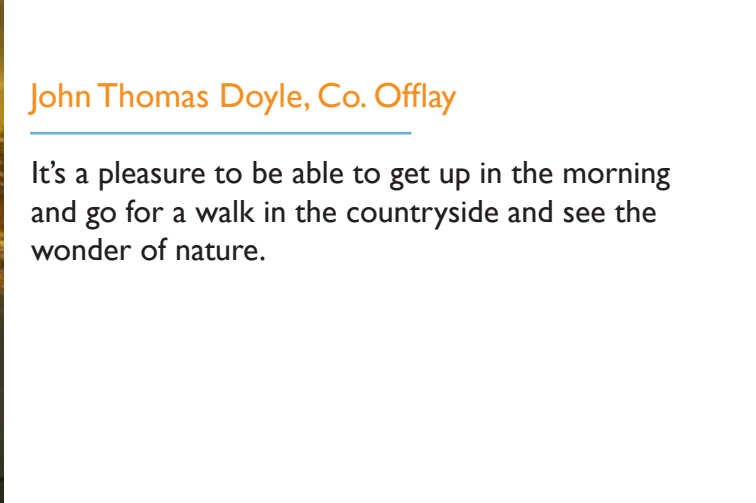
The wonder of my first grandchild, Baby Jack
born in May 2016...I can't imagine having to
miss watching and seeing this little wonder in
our world. Every little detail, each little smile.



Martin Lynch, Co Kildare

Here's Looking At You Kid

I took this picture of two swans on the Royal Canal last year. The closeness of the two swans to each other, and with one looking at the other, makes for a very pleasing photograph. You may also find it particularly relevant given the nature of the work that your organisations do in the context of protecting eyesight.



John Thomas Doyle, Co. Offlay

It's a pleasure to be able to get up in the morning and go for a walk in the countryside and see the wonder of nature.



Denise Coughlan, Co. Dublin

The caterpillars and butterflies were all in the reptile centre in the Park and it showed the wonderful process of transformation from caterpillar to butterfly; some were still caterpillars, some were in their chrysalises, and some fully formed butterflies.

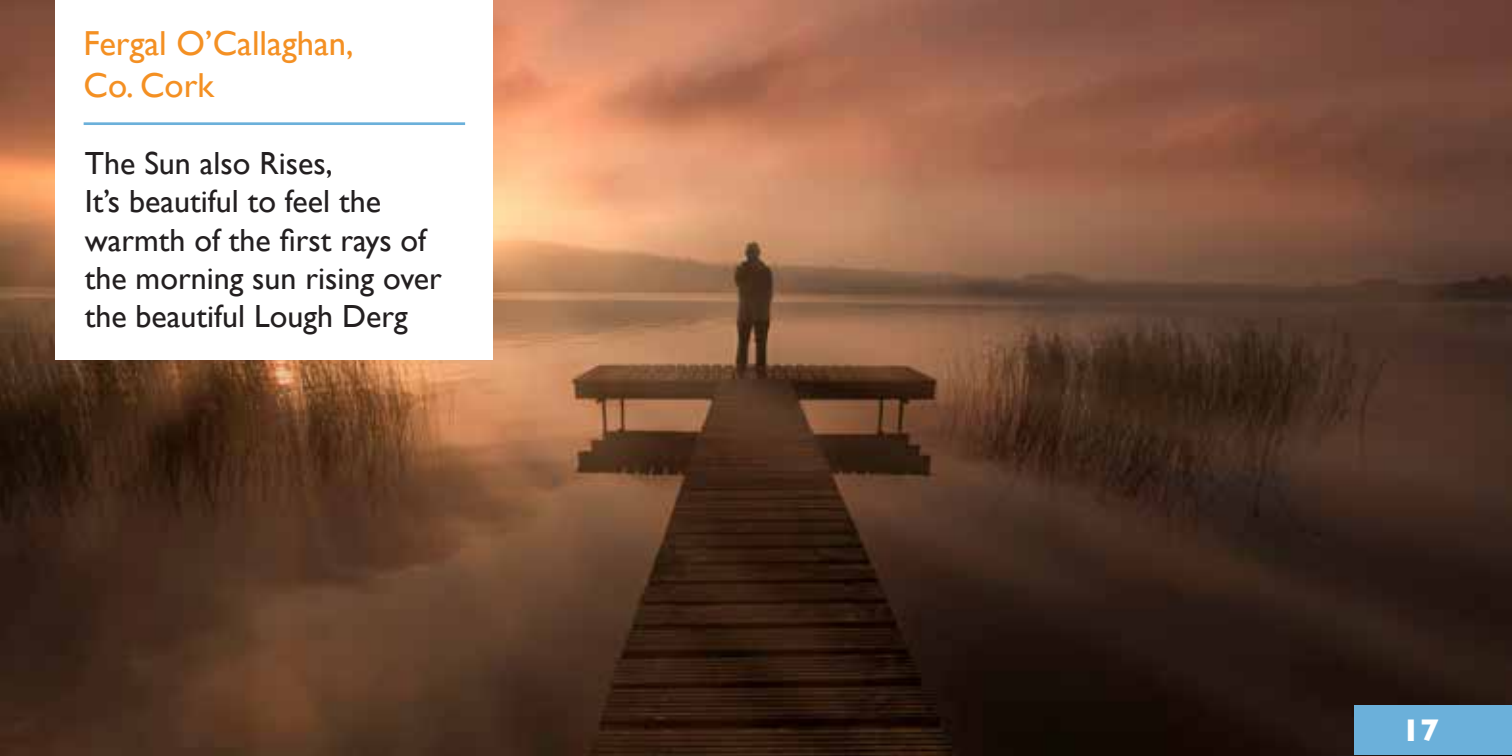


Michelle Sharkey, Co. Kildare

This was taken on my phone at 'Braveheart Hill' on The Curragh, Kildare. I live in Newbridge and this was taken on a walk with my dog Roxy about 2 weeks ago. It was an amazing sight, seeing how the sky changed during sunset within a matter of minutes. But it was also a moment of peace and tranquillity for me which is rare with a hectic life and three kids.

Fergal O'Callaghan, Co. Cork

The Sun also Rises, It's beautiful to feel the warmth of the first rays of the morning sun rising over the beautiful Lough Derg





Fiona O'Dwyer, Co. Kilkenny

This is my wonder.

I had a detached retina in 2008 while studying for my degree. I completely lost the sight in it. I've always loved beautiful landscapes but since losing my sight, capturing beautiful places and memories has become even more compelling and important to me. I took this photo near by home town of Bruff in Co. Limerick. A beauty spot called Lough Gur.



John Doyle, Co. Offaly

The Wonders of Nature: It's great to be able to go for a walk and enjoy the Wonders of nature.



Marie Morrissey, Co. Kilkenny

I am entering this photograph of a spider web covered in dew. For such small creatures to produce such webs I think it's definitely a wonder of nature.

Partner Organisations

About NCBI

NCBI is the national charity working for the rising number of people with sight loss in Ireland. NCBI provides practical and emotional support to help people with sight loss face their futures with confidence. Every year we work with 8,000 people, 2,000 of whom we are seeing for the first time as they adjust to sight loss. NCBI's services include emotional support and counselling, rehabilitation training, low vision solutions, assistive technology, employment advice and a Braille, audio and large print library.

For more information visit www.ncbi.ie or contact us on 01 8307033.



About Fighting Blindness

Fighting Blindness is an Irish patient-led charity funding and enabling world-leading research into treatments and cures for blindness. It provides a professional counselling service to support people affected by sight loss. Through education and advocacy Fighting Blindness works to empower everyone in Ireland living with severe vision impairment. Fighting Blindness is involved with rare, genetic, age-related and degenerative conditions and represents the 224,000 adults and children in Ireland who are affected by severe vision impairment.

For more information please call 01 6789 004 or visit www.FightingBlindness.ie



About The Association of Optometrists Ireland

The Association of Optometrists Ireland (AOI) is the professional representative body for the vast majority of practising optometrists in the country. Formerly known as ophthalmic opticians and commonly referred to as opticians, the official title in Irish law is now optometrist. The Association, in conjunction with the Opticians Board, which is the statutory regulatory authority, provides a supervisory and ethical environment for all members. The purpose of this is to ensure the highest possible standards in provision of clinical and dispensing services to the public. Subscription to the Association's Code of Ethics and Practice is mandatory for all members.



About the Irish College of Ophthalmologists

The Irish College of Ophthalmologists (ICO) is the professional and training body for eye doctors and the expert body on medical eye care in Ireland.

The ICO is dedicated to promoting excellence in eye care through the education of its members, trainees and the public. Our central mission is to reduce the number of annual cases of preventable blindness affecting people in Ireland and to maintain standards of excellence in eye health care delivery. We do this by educating eye doctors in training, providing on-going education for eye doctors in practice, giving accurate medical advice to the public and policy guidance for the government. The ICO places a priority on raising the public's awareness of eye health and the significance of eye health as an indicator of general health and wellbeing.

For more information on eye health, visit www.eyedoctors.ie



About Healthy Ireland

Healthy Ireland is the national framework for improved health and wellbeing in Ireland. Healthy Ireland's vision is that every person in Ireland can enjoy physical and mental health and wellbeing to their full potential, where wellbeing is valued and supported at every level of society and is everyone's responsibility. This understanding calls for a partnership approach in all of the actions set out in the Framework. Healthy Ireland is designed to harness the energy, creativity and expertise of everyone whose work promotes health and wellbeing, and encourages all sectors of society to get involved in making Ireland a healthier place to live, work and play.

For further information, please visit: www.healthyireland.ie

About Novartis

Novartis is the only healthcare company globally with leading positions in pharmaceuticals, eye care and cost-saving generics. Novartis employs approximately 130,000 people worldwide and over 1,600 in Ireland in two manufacturing plants in Cork and commercial operations in Dublin. Novartis has an industry-leading pipeline with over 200 projects in clinical development. Novartis ranks number one in Ireland in number of clinical trials, currently conducting 30 clinical trials, involving over 900 patients.

For more information, please visit www.novartis.ie.

**Thanks to these organisations
for their support of this campaign**



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