



**FLORIDA EYE**  
*Microsurgical Institute, Inc.*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**WITH VISION PROBLEMS AFFECTING ONE IN TWENTY PRESCHOOLERS AND ONE IN FOUR SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN, THE OPHTHALMOLOGISTS AT FLORIDA EYE MICROSURGICAL INSTITUTE ARE URGING PARENTS TO HAVE THEIR CHILDREN'S EYES EXAMINED ONCE A YEAR, EVERY YEAR**

*Boynton Beach, August 13th, 2009...* 14-year-old Jared Grossman, who will be starting his freshman year at Spanish River High School in Boca Raton in a few days, woke up recently complaining to his mom that his eyes were bothering him. After asking her son a few questions, Amy Grossman picked up the phone and called her son's ophthalmologist, whom she hadn't taken her son to see in years. Her thinking? Why bother with an eye exam when Jared never had previous problems or complaints, didn't wear glasses and was active and healthy?

And that, unfortunately, is the way most of us think, says Dr. Lee Friedman, who happens to be Jared's eye doctor and the pediatric ophthalmologic and strabismus specialist at Florida Eye Microsurgical Institute. "If it's not broken why fix it? If there are no complaints, why go to an optometrist or ophthalmologist?" But that kind of thinking, says Dr. Friedman, is not the best approach when it comes to eye care. "Just like you need to bring your car in for maintenance, or change the air filters in your home periodically throughout the year, children, as well as adults, need to have their eyes examined yearly. Think of it as preventative care."

Yearly eye exams are very important, stresses Dr. Friedman, because besides practicing preventative care, it is possible for your child to have a serious vision problem without your even being aware of it. As a matter of fact, eye exams are so important that several years ago September was designated as Children's Eye Health & Safety Month by the American Academy of Ophthalmology, in an effort to help educate the public about the importance of regular eye exams.

“Infants should be screened for common eye problems during their regular pediatric appointments and vision testing should be conducted for all children starting at around three years of age,” says Dr. Friedman. “And if there is a family history of eye problems or if a problem is apparent, your eye doctor may suggest your child’s eyes be examined more frequently.”

According to Dr. Friedman, during most exams, an eye doctor will look for amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (crossed eyes), ptosis (drooping of the upper eyelid), color deficiency (color blindness) and refractive errors (nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism). “Aside from vision threatening conditions, eye screenings for children are important because vision changes can occur without you or your child noticing them,” says Friedman, which is just what happened with Jared. “And if your child is having trouble seeing the blackboard or the words in a book, learning, as well as participating in recreational activities will suffer.”

In Jared’s case, after a thorough eye exam, Dr. Friedman found that the high school student needed glasses. Dr. Friedman sent Jared and Amy to their local optical shop with a script in hand and a new appreciation for regular eye care. “I didn’t realize why I was getting headaches,” says Jared. “It wasn’t until my eyes started hurting that I told my mom something was up. I never even thought that I might need glasses.” His mom Amy is just glad that Jared spoke up. “Now he’s all set for school. He’ll be able to see the board clearly and read all his assignments. No excuses for bad grades,” jokes Amy, who says she’ll be taking her two daughters to Dr. Friedman for eye exams as well.

The Florida Eye Microsurgical Institute offers a full range of comprehensive ophthalmologic care, including routine eye care and examinations, pediatric eye care, dry eyes, advanced corneal, retinal and cataract procedures, laser treatments, glaucoma and diabetic procedures, and various other sophisticated treatments. With its own pediatric wing and fully accredited outpatient surgical center in Boynton Beach, the Institute also has additional offices in Boca Raton, Wellington, and Juno Beach.

Also at Florida Eye with Dr. Friedman is Dr. Randy Katz, the Institute's retinal and macular degeneration specialist, and cornea and external disease specialist Dr. Barry Schechter. Dr. Jonathan Chua covers general ophthalmology, and Dr. Jason Gorscak joined the practice this past year as an associate in general ophthalmology. For more information on the Institute, its physicians and current clinical trials, please contact Gwen Cohan at (561) 736-5050 and visit [www.fleyedocs.com](http://www.fleyedocs.com).

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## SIDEBAR

*The American Academy of Ophthalmology* ([www.geteyesmart.org](http://www.geteyesmart.org)) offers these eye health tips for high school and college students...

Students face special challenges to the eyes when they are under academic performance pressure. Lack of sleep, prolonged computer use and long hours studying make for tired eyes that are dry, scratchy and achy. Prolonged computer use contributes to eye fatigue because you blink less frequently. Less blinking significantly reduces lubrication in the eye making it feel tired, scratchy and “dry” as a result. Also eyes are not designed for prolonged focus on a single object, such as the computer. Remedy: place a note on the computer screen as a reminder to blink and to look away from the screen and focus on objects in the distance. Looking out a window (20 – 20 – 20 rule: for every 20 minutes of computer work, look away for 20 seconds, and focus on a scene or object at least 20 feet away) is a good break for the eyes. The key is to give your eyes a rest.

“Dry eye” is a common feeling from not giving your eyes enough rest while some people just naturally do not produce enough tears to keep their eyes healthy and comfortable. Some common symptoms of dry eye are stinging and burning to the eyes, scratchiness, excessive eye irritation from smoke or wind and excessive tearing. Remedy: If you have occasional symptoms of dry eye, you should try eye drops called artificial tears. These are similar to your own tears and help lubricate the eyes and maintain moisture. For persistent “dry eye,” see your Eye MD.

When a contact-lens wearer stays awake studying for 18-20 hours or more with their contacts in, it's almost the equivalent of sleeping with contacts in, something that Eye M.D.s warn against. Prolonged wearing of your contact lenses is a problem for people who wear regular hydrogen lenses, since traditional hydrogels are relatively less permeable to oxygen than newer alternatives like silicone hydrogels. The eye needs oxygen to keep it healthy. Without regular exposure to oxygen, the eye's cornea can become inflamed and the vision blurry. Prolonged contact lens use can even lead to infections or corneal ulcers that in the worst case can permanently damage vision.

Sometimes students fall asleep without knowing it (with their contacts in), while studying. Remedy: Alternate wearing contact lenses with use of eyeglasses during long study periods. Also, students with irregular sleep patterns can wear contact lenses made of silicon hydrogen, a new material with improved oxygen permeability, which may reduce risk of infection and discomfort.