

Author Ian Rankin urges Scots to have an eye test

Author Ian Rankin who is a great supporter of the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) urges people across Scotland to have an eye test.

35% of Scots admit that they have eyes issues which they have not told their optician about, things such as black spots or being dazzled by bright lights. Just over one fifth have not had an eye test in the past two years and about 4% have never had an eye test at all.



The research which uncovered these statistics was conducted by RNIB and opticians, [Specsavers](#). They have produced a report called State of the Nation Eye Health 2017 : A Year in Review.

Rankin, who began wearing reading glasses only a few years ago, wants you to make this part of your regular health routine.

He said: 'People need to get used to it, as they would going to the dentist. There might be nothing wrong, but it's better to be safe than sorry, so don't get lazy, get into your opticians for an appointment.'

'As someone who writes books for a living it's important that I can see the screen and read a page of text with ease. And equally I want readers to be able to read and enjoy books without struggling.'

During his most recent routine eye test last year, Ian said Specsavers took a picture of the back of his eye which revealed signs that could be a precursor to macular

degeneration.

He said: 'To my surprise I was advised to introduce kale to my diet, and I thought it was fascinating that a simple change of eating habits could help to limit future problems.

'I only wish it was chocolate I'd been advised to eat rather than kale, as I'd have no problem sticking to that! But joking aside, I do think this is a reminder that eye tests are such an important health check and I'd urge Scots to remember this.'



Eye tests are free under the NHS in Scotland.

Jill McArthur, Chairperson for Specsavers in Scotland, says: 'It is worrying that so many Scots aren't going for regular eye checks, and especially concerning that many more are ignoring symptoms of potential eye issues.

'Having an eye exam every two years is vital, not just because it can pick up on vision issues, but because it can detect signs of many underlying conditions, including tumours, diabetes, high blood pressure and even cardio-vascular disease. An eye exam should be considered an important part of your regular health routine and that's why we're encouraging Scots to take note of the State Of The Nation Eye Health 2017 report and ensure they attend regular tests.'

RNIB acting CEO Sally Harvey says: 'Our report reveals new evidence that one in five people will live with sight loss in their lifetime, so our work is now more important than ever. The eye health crisis looks set to deepen and the cost burden is destined to soar unless urgent action is taken.

'Almost 80 per cent of people living with sight loss are over the age of 64 [\[viii\]](#), so with an ageing population that is

expected to retire later, more of our national workforce will be impacted by sight loss. Alongside rapidly growing demand for eyecare services, and capacity problems in some clinics at a time of growing budget deficits, we are facing an extremely challenging time for eye health in the UK, and we must take action now.'

Specsavers founder Doug Perkins has been an optometrist for more than 50 years. He said : 'We are calling on political leaders, senior decision makers in health and social care, and local champions to work together to ensure that people receive timely treatment to prevent avoidable sight loss.

'Without this leadership the eye health crisis will continue to worsen and patients' sight will be put increasingly at risk, deepening the economic burden that we already estimate will rise from £28 billion today if nothing is done now.'

The report, written by RNIB and Specsavers and supplemented by an independent YouGov poll of 6,430 UK adults, marks a stepping up of RNIB and Specsavers' transforming eye health campaign, which will include a multi-million pound investment in marketing, nationwide fundraising and a tour of the UK with their Eye Pod simulated sight loss experience to educate the nation about the importance of eye health.

The tour will visit Buchanan Street in Glasgow on Wednesday 27th September.

The full report can be downloaded [here](#).