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USING EYE COSMETICS AND CONTACT LENSES CORRECTLY CAN HELP KEEP EYES HEALTHY AND BEAUTIFUL

Prevent Blindness America Offers Safety Tips to Promote Proper Use of Eye Makeup and Contact Lens Care

CHICAGO (March 27, 2009) – The cosmetics and personal care products industry generates more than \$250 billion globally. Although the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) monitors many of these products for safety, consumers need to make sure they are using products correctly to help protect themselves.

Improper use of eye cosmetics can lead to eye infections, irritations and corneal injuries. Prevent Blindness America is using April's Women's Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month as an opportunity to offer free tips to the public on the safe use of eye cosmetics. And, contact lens wearers should take extra precautions as cosmetics are a common source of eye problems for contact lens users.

"From adolescents beginning to experiment with make-up to adults who wear it daily, we want to get everyone in the habit of applying cosmetics in a safe way to avoid painful eye injuries," said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. "All healthy eyes are beautiful!"

Prevent Blindness America advises cosmetic users of all ages to:

- Never use makeup testers in stores or share eye makeup with others.
- Dispose of eye cosmetics three months after purchased, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO).
- Always apply makeup outside the lash line to avoid contact with the eye.
- Never store cosmetics in extreme heat or cold conditions (such as a car), as this can break down preservatives, allowing bacteria to grow.
- Never apply makeup while driving or riding in a moving vehicle.
- Never apply eye cosmetics if eyes are already red, swollen, or if you have recently undergone eye surgery until an eye doctor has given permission.
- Do not dye eyelashes or eyebrows. No color additives have been approved by the FDA for permanent dyeing or tinting of eyelashes or eyebrows.

Whether contact lenses are used for vision correction or simply to change the appearance of eye color, they should never be considered merely cosmetic. In fact, in 2005, the FDA stated that all contact lenses are considered medical devices and therefore can only be used under the direction of an eye care professional. Contact lens users should:

- Visit a licensed eye care professional to be fitted for contact lenses.
- Use pressed eye shadows in conjunction with an eye shadow base to help makeup stay in place.
- Always insert contact lenses before applying makeup and remove them before taking makeup off.
- Never share or trade contact lenses with others.
- Before handling contact lenses, wash hands with soap and water, then rinse and dry them with a lint-free towel.
- Minimize contact with water, including removing lenses before going swimming or in a hot tub.
- Contact lens cases should always be cleaned with fresh solution – not water. Leave the empty case open to air dry.
- Do not use cracked or damaged lens cases. Lens cases can be a source of contamination and infection.
- Keep the contact lens case clean and replace it regularly, at least every three months.

For more tips and information on the safe use of eye cosmetics and/or contact lens safety, please visit Prevent Blindness America at preventblindness.org or call (800) 331-2020.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, it's committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more

information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call (800) 331-2020 or visit us on the Web at preventblindness.org.

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