



Embargoed until 12.01am on 27 October 2020

Shane Jacobson and Jean Kittson tackle blindness risk in new TV ad campaign

Macular Disease Foundation Australia (MDFA) has recruited the talent of Shane Jacobson and long-term MDFA Ambassador Jean Kittson to support a new TV campaign to help stop Aussies in their 50s losing their sight from macular disease.

The popular actors, writers and comedians have teamed up to voice a commercial for Check My Macula (www.CheckMyMacula.com.au), a short online quiz that reveals your risk factors for macular disease then helps you book an eye exam with your optometrist.

The ad rolls out from Tuesday 27 October, urging viewers to add an eye exam to the shopping list of other health checks we're told to tick off when we turn 50.

The ad addresses the check list of life-saving medical examinations all Australians should be taking from the milestone age of 50 and beyond. It aims to bring eye examinations into the commonly known list of bowel, breast, prostate and heart – to name a few.

A Galaxy Poll conducted by MDFA showed that among Australians between the ages of 50 and 64, only six per cent say that an eye disease check is their top health check priority.¹

Watch the Check My Macula ads here: [\[link to https://vimeopro.com/tcsstreaming/mdfa-rubber-gloves or YouTube, once uploaded\]](https://vimeopro.com/tcsstreaming/mdfa-rubber-gloves)

"Many Aussie blokes have a 'you'll be right' attitude towards their health, and they tend to bury their heads in the sand when it comes to routine check-ups like an eye exam," Jacobson says. "But your vision is far too precious to gamble with."

Jacobson celebrated his 50th birthday this March, placing him in the age group that should have an eye exam every two years, then every year once they turn 65.

"If you're over 50 and you don't know your risk factors for macular disease, you're at risk of going blind. It's that serious," Jacobson warns. "But Check My Macula, it's a quick online quiz that tells you your individual risk factors in five easy questions in less than a minute, then helps you book a check-up at the optometrist, so simple and so worth it."

MDFA Ambassador and much-loved entertainer Jean Kittson knows only too well that family history is a major risk factor for macular disease. Jean's mother Elaine, now in her 90s, has lived with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) for more than 30 years. This direct family history means that Jean has a 50 per cent chance of developing the disease, so she's particularly diligent with her optometrist appointments.

"Quite frankly, I don't manage my general health down to the last detail, but once a year I'll make sure I have an eye exam," Kittson says.

"Now I'm in my 60s, there's a lot to check: my hearing, my skin, my eyesight... the list keeps growing. However, because of my family history, I do make sure that I get an eye test and macula check every year."

Kittson, who has been sharing the eye health message as an MDFA Ambassador for more than 10 years, says that although the commercial might not be serious, its message is.

“You are risking your vision if you don’t have regular eye exams, including a check of the macula,” Kittson says. “Early diagnosis is imperative for treatment, so my key message for everyone is get your macula checked, especially if you have someone in your family with AMD.”

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About Macular Disease Foundation Australia (MDFA)

MDFA is the peak national body representing the voice of the macular disease community. It is committed to reducing the incidence and impact of macular disease, the leading cause of blindness and severe vision loss in Australia. It provides a range of information and support services via its National Helpline 1800 111 709 and online webinar series, available at www.mdfoundation.com.au.

About Check My Macula

The Check My Macula quiz, an initiative of MDFA, is available at www.CheckMyMacula.com.au. The online quiz has been developed by MDFA as an educational tool and is based on known risk factors. Other risk factors, not included, may influence development of macular disease. This tool does not replace an eye exam or advice provided by a qualified eye health professional – an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

¹ Consumer survey conducted by Galaxy Research, 2-6 March 2017, N = 1,012.

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