

Give The Gift of Color Vision

New Glasses Heal the Color Blind

By Brenda Fishbaugh

Maybe you've already seen it on TV: the new, miracle eyeglasses that can restore a colorblind person's ability to discern colors. Enchroma is the company that created the technology that allows red/green colorblind people to see what they've been missing. A friend of mine and all her siblings pooled their funds to buy them for their father. "At \$349, the glasses are little pricey," comments Abby Leon. "My dad was overwhelmed when he put them on. He really didn't know what he'd been missing!" So, what is color blindness, or Color Vision Deficiency (CVD)? People with this condition are unable to see colors under normal light, and have a hard time telling one color from another.

Color blindness affects millions of people, worldwide – one in 12 men and one in 200 women. The condition ranges from a variety of classes, red-green color blindness being the most common. Most people who suffer from color blindness are not blind to color, but have a diminished ability to see them. CVD can be acquired, but most is inherited genetically. The genes that influence the colors

inside the eyes, called photopigments, are carried on the X chromosome. If these genes are abnormal or damaged, color blindness occurs.

People with red-green color blindness see the world differently. Their red and green photopigments have more overlap than normal, making them unable to see certain colors. Enchroma found a way to alleviate this by creating a specialized lens that filters out specific colors. And, yes, Enchroma can also add a prescription to the lenses. They

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also have comprehensive information on proper sizing, as well.

In a *Newsweek* article, author Godo Lidz writes, "Sometimes, there are tragic consequences of color blindness, and Jay Neitz has seen them. One of his patients caused a fatal car accident because he couldn't see a flashing red light. Another was denied a lifelong dream of becoming an airplane pilot. In Romania and Turkey, the color-blind are prohibited from obtaining driver's

licenses. In the past, full or partial color blindness was a disqualifying condition for service in the U.S. military. The condition is still an impediment to becoming a graphic designer, computer developer, police officer or pharmacist, among other professions."

I also found several other manufacturers of colorblindness correcting glasses on Amazon, eBay and the like, ranging from \$60 for lenses that clip on over normal eye glasses, to the high-end Enchroma glasses described above.

If you aren't sure whether you are colorblind, Enchroma has a great test you can take at Enchroma.com.

Wouldn't giving color vision to a loved one be the ultimate holiday gift? ■



About the Author:

Tanning industry veteran Brenda Fishbaugh is president of Eye Pro, Inc., makers of disposable eyewear. She travels extensively training

salons on the effects of UV light on vision.

