

News Release



CIBA Vision Corporation
11460 Johns Creek Pkwy
Duluth, GA 30097

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Lisa Gilbert +1 678-415-3551

Lisa-1.gilbert@cibavision.com

New O₂OPTIX Custom™ Lenses Bring the Health Benefits of Silicone Hydrogel Lenses to Even the Most Challenging-to-Fit Patients in North America

CIBA Vision Expands the O₂OPTIX Family of Breathable Contact Lenses with Breakthrough Material and Manufacturing Innovations

ATLANTA, Dec. 8, 2006 – With the introduction of O₂OPTIX Custom lenses, CIBA Vision is proud to provide eye care professionals with a lens to help even their most challenging-to-fit contact lens patients enjoy the benefits of silicone hydrogel lenses. The latest silicone hydrogel innovation from CIBA Vision, O₂OPTIX Custom is unlike any other product on the market. With a Dk/t of 117 @ -3.00D, O₂OPTIX Custom lenses (sifilcon A) transmit up to 5 times more oxygen than the leading made-to-order soft contact lenses (methafilcon B, phemfilcon A)ⁱ. The lenses are available for high myopia, high hyperopia, large and small corneas, steep and flat corneas and aphakia.

O₂OPTIX Custom sphere lenses will be available for ordering in North America in mid-January 2007. CIBA Vision will introduce this lens in additional markets later in 2007, and it will be known as AIR OPTIX™ Individual in Europe. The range of O₂OPTIX Custom lenses will be expanded to include toric designs in the near future.

“Made-to-order soft contact lenses tend to be thicker than standard soft lenses due to the unique design requirements. This can impede the flow of oxygen,” said Tim Giles, O.D., Global Head of Professional Services, Specialty Lenses. “Therefore, patients that require unique parameters are often the ones who can benefit from high oxygen transmissibility the most, and now eye care professionals have a healthy and comfortable solution to offer these patients.”

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As with the O₂OPTIX Sphere lenses (lotrafilcon B), O₂OPTIX Custom lenses feature a patented, biocompatible plasma surface treatment that resists deposits to contribute to healthy lens wear. With this unique surface treatment, O₂OPTIX Custom lenses can be worn comfortably on a daily wear basis for up to three monthsⁱⁱ. They are approved for daily wear, and are recommended for quarterly replacement. Compared to low-Dk/t conventional lenses, which are typically replaced annually, more frequent replacement of O₂OPTIX Custom lenses helps promote better hygieneⁱⁱⁱ.

Along with the breakthrough silfilcon A lens material, CIBA Vision has developed the patented, state-of-the-art InnoLathe™ manufacturing technology to produce O₂OPTIX Custom lenses. Together, this material and manufacturing process allow CIBA Vision to lathe-cut these silicone hydrogel lenses, which has been very challenging to do because of the unique properties of silicone hydrogel materials.

“CIBA Vision is a leader in silicone hydrogel technology, and the introduction of O₂OPTIX Custom demonstrates our commitment to bringing the benefits of this innovation to all patients,” said Michael Kehoe, CEO. “Eye care professionals can expect continued extensions of our O₂OPTIX family of breathable lenses.”

O₂OPTIX Custom lenses are available in sphere powers from +20.00D to -20.00D in 0.25D steps. They will be offered with a 13.2 mm diameter in base curves of 7.4, 7.7, 8.0 or 8.3; and a 14.0 mm diameter in base curves of 7.8, 8.1, 8.4, 9.7 or 9.0; or a 14.8 mm diameter in base curves of 8.0, 8.3, 8.6, 8.9, or 9.2. They have 32 percent water content, and feature a light green handling tint.

Eye care professionals in North America can visit o2optixcustom.com for more information.

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About CIBA Vision

With worldwide headquarters in Atlanta, CIBA Vision is a global leader in research, development and manufacturing of optical products and services, including contact lenses and lens care products. CIBA Vision products are available in more than 70 countries. For more information, visit the CIBA Vision Web site at www.cibavision.com.

CIBA Vision is the eye care unit of Novartis AG (NYSE:NVS), a world leader in offering medicines to protect health, cure disease and improve well-being. Our goal is to discover, develop and successfully market innovative products to treat patients, ease suffering and enhance the quality of life. Novartis is the only company with leadership positions in both patented and generic pharmaceuticals. We are strengthening our medicine-based portfolio, which is focused on strategic growth platforms in innovation-driven pharmaceuticals; high-quality, low-cost generics; human vaccines and leading self-medication OTC brands. In 2005, the Group's business achieved net sales of USD 32.2 billion and net income of USD 6.1 billion. Group companies employ approximately 96,000 people and operate in over 140 countries around the world. For more information, please visit www.novartis.com.

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O₂OPTIX Custom™ is known as AIR OPTIX™ Individual in Europe.

ⁱ CIBA Vision. Data on file. 2006.

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