



## Gail Devers, Three-Time Olympic Gold Medalist, Partners with the Graves' Community to FOCUS on Thyroid Eye Disease

June 28, 2021

*Devers to Share Inspiring Personal Story as Part of New Education Initiative and Podcast Series*

DUBLIN--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jun. 28, 2021-- For Graves' Disease Awareness Month in July, Horizon Therapeutics plc (Nasdaq: HZNP) is teaming up with world-renowned track star and three-time Olympic gold medalist Gail Devers, who has been living with Graves' disease and symptoms of Thyroid Eye Disease (TED) for more than 30 years. Horizon and Devers are collaborating with [The American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association](#), the [Graves' Disease and Thyroid Foundation](#) and [Prevent Blindness](#) to help people living with Graves' disease FOCUS on their eye health.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20210628005062/en/>



Gail Devers (Photo: Business Wire)

Up to half of people living with Graves' disease may develop TED – a serious, progressive and vision-threatening rare autoimmune disease that causes symptoms including eye bulging, double vision and debilitating pain behind the eyes.<sup>1,2</sup> Although TED is related to Graves' disease, it requires specialized treatment separate from Graves'. Spotting the signs and symptoms of TED early can help decrease the chances of serious damage to vision and appearance of the eyes.<sup>3</sup>

"I struggled with life-changing symptoms for more than two years before I got answers – which is why I'm passionate about raising awareness today, so others don't have to put their dreams on hold like I did," said Devers. "But even since my Graves' disease diagnosis thirty years ago, it wasn't until recently that I found out that my eye bulging, pain and constant irritation may be caused by a separate disease. I now know they could be associated with Thyroid Eye Disease and I hope my story will inspire others to know their risk and take action."

This initiative was created to bring attention, education and resources to people who are at risk for TED, including:

- The new *Listen to Your Eyes* podcast series, featuring Devers and TED experts
- Videos and empowerment tips from Devers, available on [www.FOCUSonTED.com](http://www.FOCUSonTED.com) and the *Listen to Your Eyes* [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages
- A memory device, available in English and Spanish, that provides steps to help people living with Graves' disease FOCUS on their eye health, spot the signs of TED and take action

"Gail's perseverance throughout her health struggles is amazing, and a tremendous example to anyone who is facing what may seem like unsurmountable odds," said Matt Flesch, vice president, communications and patient advocacy, Horizon. "Her story is a testament to the power of being your own advocate and we hope that together, we can empower others with the education and support they need when navigating the life-changing challenges caused by Thyroid Eye Disease."

People who are living with Graves' disease are encouraged to pay attention to changes in their eyes and visit a TED specialist – such as a neuro-ophthalmologist or an oculoplastic surgeon – to get a comprehensive eye exam. To find a nearby TED specialist, visit [www.TEDdoctors.com](http://www.TEDdoctors.com).

### About Gail Devers

Gail Devers is a world-renowned track star and three-time Olympic gold medalist who has been living with Graves' disease and symptoms of TED for

more than 30 years. After a harrowing two-and-a-half-year quest for answers, she was diagnosed with Graves' disease in 1990, just two years before winning her first Olympic gold medal. Her journey back to the track was nothing short of remarkable as she suffered near career-ending symptoms, including extreme weight loss, fatigue, and insomnia. She also had symptoms of TED including eye pain, dryness, irritation and bulging eyes. In her decorated 25-year track career that followed, Gail has been recognized as a five-time Olympian, back-to-back 100m Olympic champion, three-time 100m hurdles world champion, and inductee of both the National Track and Field and the United States Olympic Halls of Fame.

#### **About Graves' Disease**

Graves' disease is an autoimmune disease that causes the thyroid gland to produce excess thyroid hormones.<sup>2</sup> These hormones control a variety of bodily functions, from metabolism and breathing, to heart rate, body temperature and cognitive emotions.<sup>5</sup> Common symptoms of Graves' disease include anxiety, tremors, heat sensitivity, weight loss, hair loss, change in menstrual cycle and irregular heartbeat.<sup>2,6</sup>

#### **About Thyroid Eye Disease**

TED is a serious, progressive and vision-threatening rare autoimmune disease.<sup>4</sup> While TED often occurs in people living with hyperthyroidism or Graves' disease, it is a distinct disease that is caused by autoantibodies activating an IGF-1R-mediated signaling complex on cells within the retro-orbital space.<sup>7,8</sup> This leads to a cascade of negative effects, which may cause long-term damage to the eyes. As TED progresses, the serious damage it can cause includes proptosis (eye bulging), strabismus (misalignment of the eyes) and diplopia (double vision) – and in some cases can lead to blindness.<sup>9,10</sup> Additional information on TED can be found on [ThyroidEyes.com](http://ThyroidEyes.com).

#### **About The American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association**

The American Autoimmune Related Diseases Association is the nation's only nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing a national focus to autoimmunity as a category of disease and a major women's health issue, promoting public awareness, patient education and support, advocacy, and collaborative research efforts to promote better treatments and a cure for all autoimmune diseases. For more information, visit [www.aarda.org](http://www.aarda.org). Follow us on social media: Facebook ([www.facebook.com/Autoimmunity](https://www.facebook.com/Autoimmunity)), Twitter ([@AARDATweets](https://twitter.com/AARDATweets)), Instagram ([@autoimmune\\_diseases](https://www.instagram.com/autoimmune_diseases)), and YouTube ([www.youtube.com/AARDATube](https://www.youtube.com/AARDATube)).

#### **About The Graves' Disease and Thyroid Foundation**

The Graves' Disease and Thyroid Foundation (GDATF) is the leading source of help and hope for people with Graves' disease and other thyroid related disorders. The organization provides education and support for patients, family members, caregivers, friends and healthcare professionals. GDATF has helped thousands of patients better understand the symptoms and treatment programs for Graves' disease. The Foundation is a 501 C(3) tax-exempt non-profit international charitable organization. For more information, visit [www.GDATF.org](http://www.GDATF.org) and find us on Twitter ([@GDATE](https://twitter.com/GDATE)), [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/GDATE) and Instagram.

#### **About Prevent Blindness**

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness 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 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, Prevent Blindness is committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, visit us at [preventblindness.org](http://preventblindness.org), and follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/preventblindness), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/preventblindness), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/preventblindness) and [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/preventblindness).

#### **About Horizon**

Horizon is focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of medicines that address critical needs for people impacted by rare, autoimmune and severe inflammatory diseases. Our pipeline is purposeful: we apply scientific expertise and courage to bring clinically meaningful therapies to patients. We believe science and compassion must work together to transform lives. For more information on how we go to incredible lengths to impact lives, please visit [www.horizontherapeutics.com](http://www.horizontherapeutics.com) and follow us on [Twitter](https://twitter.com/horizontherapeutics), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/horizontherapeutics), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/horizontherapeutics) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/horizontherapeutics).

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