

CLEAR TALK

A NEWSLETTER FROM GRUTZMACHER & LEWIS

Spring 2009

KABIRA SHARES HER THANKS

“With gratitude and much happiness, I would like to share my story. First of all, I want to thank Dr. Richard Lewis and his staff at Grutzmacher & Lewis for their patience and compassion for my situation but most all for the doctor’s medical expertise. There are not enough words to express how happy and grateful I am. I pray that God rewards their work and protects them and their families.

My vision was normal until I was 13 years old. At that time, I began seeing red spots across my left eye. After three surgeries, I completely lost the vision in my left eye. Then in 1992 the red spots began appearing in my right eye and another surgery was performed at a clinic in Nantes, France by Dr. Philippe Sourdille.

After the surgery, Dr. Sourdille informed me that I had an unknown eye disease. He said that I would have to check it every year for the rest of my life because there was nothing to compare it with and that it was very possible it could come back at any time.

In the last eight years my vision became increasingly worse, to the point that I could hardly see at all. In May 2008, Dr. Lewis performed cataract surgery. After my recuperation, I was able to experience the joy of reading again, watching



Dr. Richard Lewis (right) with a patient

my favorite television shows, cooking and most importantly seeing my family and friends.

I want to thank everybody who helped me through this very difficult time in my life. Without their love and support, I would not have the opportunity to see the beautiful world we all share.”

New Eye Disease Screening Recommendations

The American Academy of Ophthalmology has issued new eye screening recommendations. A baseline eye screening is recommended for adults at or around the age of 40 years who do not have eye disease or risk factors for eye or general health disease.

Why age 40?

Early signs of eye disease and changes in vision can begin to occur at this age. Like mammograms or colonoscopies, these screenings at mid-life can catch early signs of disease. Once a baseline is determined in regard to a patient’s general eye health, the eye care professional can alert them to any symptoms of eye disease, give recommendations for eye care and let the patient know when to come back for follow-up exams.

For individuals of any age that are at risk for eye disease (a family history of glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetes or high blood pressure), that have symptoms of eye disease,

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EYE-MYTH BUSTERS – FACT OR FICTION?

How is your Eye Knowledge?

1. People with weak eyes should avoid reading fine print.

FICTION

It is said that people with weak eyes or people who wear glasses will “wear out” their eyes sooner if they read fine print or do a lot of detail work. The concept of the eye as a muscle is incorrect. The eye more closely resembles a camera. A camera will not wear out sooner just because it is used to photograph intricate detail. You can use your eyes for detail work without fear of wearing them out. Just be sure to wear safety glasses when working with chemicals, drilling or hammering, yard work and home repairs to protect them from trauma.

2. Can caffeine prevent cataract formation?

PROBABLE

A recent study from the University of Maryland in Baltimore found caffeine may have a preventative property to cataract formation. Further study is being carried out, but for now, it is known that lenses exposed to caffeine remained clearer than those not, while exposed to UV radiation. Although the coffee and tea you

consume will not give you any benefit because it is absorbed by the intestines, someday there may be eye drops developed to slow the progression of cataracts. That said, do not use your beverage as an eye drop as it will cause damage to the delicate surface of your eye. Instead, continue to wear UVA & UVB protective sunglasses while outside to help prevent cataracts and slow macular degeneration.

3. A cataract must be ripe before it is removed.

FICTION

At one time you may have heard this because it was thought to be safer to remove a cataract when it was “ripe” using surgical techniques that are now out-dated. With today’s modern surgical procedures, a cataract can be removed whenever it begins to interfere with a person’s lifestyle, and at any age.

If you are unable to see well enough to do the things want to do, you should consider cataract surgery. It is the only way to remove a cataract and you now have options and choices for the type of lens placed in your eye during cataract surgery.

- Primary Angle Closure
- Diabetic Retinopathy

The Silent Thief

Often eye diseases have no warning signs. In fact, **glaucoma has been nicknamed the “Silent Thief of Sight”** because loss of vision often occurs gradually over a long time and may only be recognized when it is already quite advanced. Once lost, this damaged vision can never be recovered.

Leading cause of blindness

Diabetic retinopathy is a leading cause of blindness. In 2000, about 4.1 million U.S. adults 40 years and older had diabetic retinopathy, or about two fifths of those with Type II Diabetes. Although

Is LASIK Right For Me?

Have you thought about laser vision correction but wondered if it would be right for you?

An in-depth medical eye evaluation is the only way to find out if you are a good candidate physically. If most of the following statements are true for you there’s a good chance you will be pleased with the result:

- I have healthy eyes but need glasses or contact lenses.
- I am very active in sports or outdoor activities, and I feel my performance would be enhanced without my corrective lenses.
- My career opportunities would be improved if I did not have to rely on eyeglasses or contact lenses for distance vision.
- I prefer the way that I look without glasses.
- I do not tolerate contact lenses well.
- I would be happy with the results if my vision improved significantly, even if I still had to wear corrective lenses for some activities like reading.
- I want to reduce the hassle of contact lenses or glasses, and improve the quality of my life.

Drs. Richard Grutzmacher and Patricia Sierra are board-certified, fellowship-trained corneal specialists offering the safest and most precise technology for laser vision correction. If you would like to learn more about laser vision correction, please call us for a free information package and schedule a consultation to find out if LASIK is right for you!

effective treatment for reducing the risk of diabetic blindness is available, many people with diabetes don’t receive an eye evaluation and treatment in time to minimize the risk of vision loss.

You and your vision are important to us. If you are over the age of 40 or are at risk for eye disease and have not had an baseline eye screening, call our office to get started.

“Recommendations” continued from page 1

or have a systemic illness (like diabetes, high blood pressure or autoimmune disease), the Academy recommends that they see their eye care professional for a baseline screening to determine how frequently their eyes should be examined.

The new recommendations do not replace regular visits to the ophthalmologist to treat ongoing disease or injuries, or vision examinations for glasses or contact lenses. This new baseline eye disease screening is a preventative health care reminder to adults that eye disease and changes in vision can occur.

Eye diseases that are common in the 40+ age group are:

- Primary Open-Angle Glaucoma (POAG)

e-Prescribing

You may have seen recent stories in the news about E-prescribing. What is it and how does it affect doctors and patients?

E-prescribing or electronic prescribing is the doctor's use of online, computerized tools to create and sign prescriptions. At Grutzmacher & Lewis, we believe that this will bring safety and efficiency to the prescribing process for our patients including the elimination of medication errors due to poor handwriting and automated drug safety checks provided by

e-prescribing software. An added benefit is a decrease in calls from pharmacies requesting clarification of prescriptions.

You no longer need to hand carry your prescription to your pharmacy and wait for it to be filled. Your prescription can be delivered to your pharmacy even before you leave our office!

To take advantage of these benefits, be sure to give us your current pharmacy information the next time you're in for a visit.

Swimming Goggles and Glaucoma

Do you have glaucoma? Are you a swimmer? In most types of glaucoma, the eye's natural drainage system loses function and the fluid inside the eye cannot drain. This lack of drainage causes an elevation of pressure within the eye. The increase in intraocular pressure (IOP) can exert pressure on the optic nerve – the part of the eye that delivers the images you see to the brain – and result in vision loss.

A recent study (Ma, Chung et. al. 7/31/07) found that wearing small swimming goggles can elevate IOP by an av-

erage of 2.4 mmHg. This rise in pressure is considerably lower than the increase seen while standing on one's head (15.8 mm Hg) or playing the trumpet (20 mm Hg), however for a person with advanced glaucoma, it could pose a problem. Further studies are being done, but in the meanwhile if you have glaucoma and swim with goggles, be sure to come in for your routine pressure checks.

And for heaven's sake, don't wear your goggles and play the trumpet while standing on your head!

Research Update

Helping to prevent the loss of vision due to glaucoma has always been our goal. Dr. Richard Lewis has been involved in clinical glaucoma research for the past twenty-five years.

Our continued research efforts include studies to:

- understand why people get glaucoma;
- develop tests that can make an early diagnosis before vision loss occurs;
- explore for new medications, surgeries and delivery systems to more effectively treat glaucoma.

Research efforts have succeeded with the help of patients who volunteer for

clinical trials. The studies are conducted in our office and are supervised by Dr. Lewis and Dr. Robinson.

At the present time we are recruiting patients interested in the following studies:

- Punctal Plug Delivery for Glaucoma Medication
- Anecortave Medical Treatment for Glaucoma

If you would like to learn more about our current studies in glaucoma research, please call Dr. Monica Robinson, our research coordinator, at **(916) 649-1515**.

Websites

To assist you in your research, we suggest the following websites:

Grutzmacher & Lewis
www.eyelasik.com

Glaucoma
www.glaucomaweb.org
(click on Patient Resource Center)
www.glaucoma.org

Multi-Focal Lens & Implantable Contacts

Verisyse and Rezoom Lens
www.visioninfocus.com

Alcon Restor
www.cataractsurgery.com

Visian
www.staar.com
www.visx.com

LASIK
www.fda.gov/cdrh/lasik
www.lasikinstitute.com
www.lLasik.com
www.fda.gov

Cataracts
www.eyesurgeryeducation.com

Low Vision Society for the Blind
www.societyfortheblind.org

General Eye Health
www.geteyesmart.org
www.ImproveYourVision.com

Visit the Grutzmacher & Lewis website!

When you want to know more about your eye health, condition, surgical procedure or our doctors visit us first:
www.eyelasik.com

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WATCH OUT MAYBELLINE!

The FDA has approved the use of glaucoma drug Lumigan as an eyelash enhancer.

You may be familiar with the glaucoma drug Lumigan (bimatoprost) as an effective medication in reducing elevated intraocular pressure (IOP). One of the side effects of Lumigan and other prostaglandin glaucoma medications is the lengthening of eyelashes. Allergan conducted a study that found an average lengthening of 1.4 mm in study participants and an increase in eyelash thickness/fullness of 12mm and 1mm, respectively.

Now the drug is being prescribed as a novel treatment for hypotrichosis of the eyelashes under the name Latisse™. Eyelash hypotrichosis is another name for having inadequate or not enough eyelashes. Latisse™ is the first and only science-based treatment approved by the FDA to enhance eyelash prominence as measured by increases in length, thick-



ness and darkness of eyelashes.

Available only through a doctor, Latisse™ is a once-daily prescription treatment applied to the base of the upper eyelashes with a sterile, single-use-per-eye disposable applicator. Latisse™ users can expect to experience longer, fuller and darker eyelashes in as little as eight weeks, with full results in 16 weeks. To maintain effect, continued treatment with Latisse™ is required.

Flexible Spending Accounts

A Flexible Spending Arrangement (FSA), or Flexible Spending Account as they are often called, is one of a number of tax-advantaged financial accounts that can be set up through the healthcare benefits provided by your employer, including most cafeteria plans. An FSA allows you to set aside a portion of your earnings before taxes to pay for qualified healthcare expenses.

An FSA is an excellent way to save on LASIK or Premium Intra-ocular (IOL) Lenses during cataract surgery. Do your homework and you will find that you can save on the cost of these procedures and decrease your need for future prescription glasses and contact lens purchases!

Come in and see if you are a candidate for LASIK or Premium IOLs and then see your employer's healthcare manager to set up your FSA.

Get on our new e-mail list!

If you would like to receive news and updates from our office as well as information about your prescriptions and appointments, join in our new email program. Send **Jaime** an email and she will add you to our files. *As with any personal information you give us, we will protect your address and not sell or give it to any other entity.*
Send your email to: jaimep@eyelasik.com

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