

HEALTH

COMMENTARY | Eye, eye doc

Cures available for astigmatism in adults

By Dr. Rajesh Khanna
Special to The Acorn

In a previous article we discussed how astigmatism, an imperfection of the eye, can lead to eye strain, redness and headaches. In people under 45, Lasik is a good option to deal with this issue.

In this piece, we will discuss the various options available for people over 45. The good news is that astigmatism can now be permanently cured.

In this age group, the quality of tear film, the thickness of the cornea and the presence of cataracts must first be determined.

If you have a cornea of normal thickness with good tear film and no cataracts, thin-flap Lasik can get rid of the astigmatism.

If you have dry eye or a thin cornea, Superlasik or Epilasik is a better choice, as there is no cutting into the cornea to make a flap.

If cataracts are present, treatment options include limbal relaxing incision, toric intraocular lenses, multifocal IOL or toric multifocal IOL.

Limbal relaxing incisions are

derived from radial keratotomy techniques, in which cuts in the cornea are made. The number, length, depth and distance from the center of the cuts vary depending on the amount of astigmatism that has to be treated. Femtosecond lasers perform this function. These lasers are different than the one used for Lasik.

The fun part is that these lasers can also perform cataract surgery. They can make openings in the lens and chop it into small cubes. You can learn more about this in my book “The Miracle of Pi in Eye.”

The drawback of LRI is that it can treat only a small amount

of astigmatism and the effect may fade away with time.

A permanent way to correct astigmatism is the use of toric implantable lenses. These are inserted when the cataracts are removed.

They are of different powers and have to be accurately aligned for best results. If they rotate, the astigmatism correction can be affected. That is why the more stable tecnis and acrysof toric are popular.

The tecnis toric is white and allows maximum light to pass through. The yellow toric IOL absorbs blue light. In spite of the toric lenses, a person would still need reading glasses. This problem has been solved by merging the benefits of accommodating lenses and toric lenses. The FDA-approved lens is Trulign Crystalens, which will allow you to see sharply at all distances.

In the next article we will talk about multifocal toric lenses and how to choose the varied treatment options available.

For more information, call the Khanna Institute at (805) 230-2126.

Chase away those holiday blues

With the recent holidays, many people have felt a sense of loss, awkwardness or sadness that seems out of place during “the happiest season of all.” Yet it is not uncommon, said Amanda Rosaasen, M.D., a family medicine specialist who practices in Moorpark.

“During the holiday season, a lot of people experience the blues,” she said. “Sometimes it’s because they have lost a loved one within the past year, or they feel lonely, or the holidays just don’t meet their expectations, in terms of making them feel the way they think they should feel.”

But the holidays aren’t the only times of the year when people may be more susceptible to the blues. With its shorter days and cooler temperatures that keep people indoors, the winter season may trigger what is known as seasonal affective disorder.

Some people may feel down when the balmy and carefree days of summer turn toward fall, with the beginning of school and renewed responsibilities.

For those who find themselves in an emotional slump, here are a few tips to help regain a sense of optimism and well-being:

- Get active. Exercise increases oxygen flow throughout the body and releases positive hormones that can elevate a mood. Pick an enjoyable exercise at the right fitness level. Biking, hik-

- ing, basketball, golf, swimming, weightlifting, walking—any type of exercise provides benefits to one’s physical and mental health.
- Lighten up. Studies have shown that a lack of light can cause some people to feel blue. On getting up in the morning, turn on the lights or open the curtains. Whenever possible, spend time outside in the sunlight.
- Eat right. Proper nutrition can bring a body back into balance and provide a sense of well-being. Including some protein at breakfast—such as eggs, peanut butter, nuts or cheese—can boost one’s energy levels. Limit intake of caffeine and sugar.
- Pursue spirituality. Tapping into one’s spiritual nature can change one’s perspective and help reveal the bigger picture of life. The music and sacred readings of many religions also provide comfort and a sense of hope.
- Open up. It’s not easy for people to talk about their feelings of loneliness or sadness, but when they do, it often releases the hold those feelings have on them. Talk to a trusted friend, family member or religious leader. Another option is to seek out a professional counselor.
- Get out. Mingling with others can remove the stress of isolation. Join a club or sports league, get involved in a house of worship or go to a coffeehouse and strike up a conversation.

- Get a checkup. Visit a physician to rule out a physical source of the low mood, such as thyroid issues or medications.


“It’s important to understand that the blues and depression are very different issues,” Rosaasen said. “The blues usually don’t last too long and don’t create severe problems. For the most part, you can pull yourself out of the blues.”

“However, if you’re feeling down for several weeks at a time, if those feelings are keeping you from working or carrying on your daily routine, or if you have thoughts of suicide, you may be experiencing depression and should seek help from a physician right away.”

Rosaasen added that with elderly people, depression and dementia can be difficult to differentiate. Seniors who are showing signs of depression should see their primary care physician.

Courtesy of Simi Valley Hospital.

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