

MEDICAL



FROMER
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continued from last week...

Wavefront Technology

Wavefront technology allows surgeons to perform customized LASIK, LASEK and other refractive surgeries using information gathered from the patient's own eyes. During a pre-operative examination, light is projected onto the retina and a set of measurements called a wavefront is created. Data obtained from the wavefront exam is converted into a waveprint, a unique profile of the patient's optical system that is as personal as a fingerprint. Using the results of the wavefront procedure, surgeons can correct the particular refractive errors that obscure the patient's vision.

Eye Tracker

During laser vision correction surgery, laser pulses must be accurately placed to reshape the cornea. A challenge to this procedure is the patient's constant eye movement. A person's eyes make small, involuntary movements known as saccadic movements about 100 times per second. Since the saccadic movements will not stop during the surgery, most excimer laser systems use an eye-tracking device that measures the movements and guides the placement of the laser beam.

CustomVue™ LASIK

VISX™'s CustomVue procedure combines the technologies of the WaveFront and STAR S4 Excimer Laser systems for high-definition, high-accuracy LASIK vision correction. Benefits of the CustomVue process include faster treatment time, elimination of need for pharmacological pupil dilation, minimal heating of the cornea, capability of ignoring errors arising from torsional eye movements, variability of beam size and depth during spot scanning, and individualized treatment with images based on hundreds of data points gathered from each patient's pupil. An FDA clinical study reports that six months after the VISX CustomVue™ procedure:

- 100% of participants could pass a driving test without glasses or contacts
- 94% of participants could see 20/20 or better without glasses or contacts
- 74% of participants could see better than 20/20 without glasses or contacts

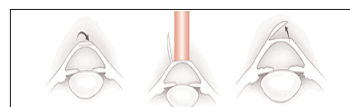
20/20 is the current standard for excellence in vision. But, with the CustomVue™ procedure, individuals have the potential to see even better than 20/20. In fact, six months after the CustomVue procedure more than 74% percent of clinical study participants saw 20/16 or better. Many patients found their night vision was improved after the CustomVue procedure. In fact, in the clinical study, four times as many participants were very satisfied with their night vision after the procedure as compared to their night vision before with glasses or contacts.

What is PRK?

PRK or Photo-Refractive Keratectomy treats refractive errors by removing tissue from the surface of the cornea. First, the epithelium, a thin layer of protective skin on the front of the cornea will be removed. Next the Excimer Laser, usually in less than a minute, will remove the proper amount of tissue thus reshaping the surface of the cornea. A bandage contact lens is then placed on the eye for 2 to 3 days until the epithelium heals. Patients often experience discomfort and a watery eye for the first 24-72 hours after their procedure. Vision may take up to three months to stabilize. Possible risks and complications include infection (very rare and usually treated with eye drops), over or under correction, glare, or post-operative haze.

Reshaping Vision

A computer, programmed by the doctor for each person's own correction factors, controls the laser and the reshaping of the cornea. The procedure is performed while the patient lies on her/his back. In treating myopia the laser segment of the procedure starts with a narrow diameter beam. As the laser beam expands or moves, a tiny lens-shaped disc is created. The focal point of the beam only penetrates the cornea about two-thousandths of an inch (about half the thickness of a human hair). Only a small area in the center of the cornea is treated, essentially producing a concave lens over the visual axis. Finally, the corneal flap is replaced without stitches and the LASIK procedure is complete. With hyperopia, the shape of the cornea is essentially steepened to allow images to correctly focus on the retina. For astigmatism, the laser beam scans back and forth along the cylindrical axis to reshape the eye.



After LASIK

After LASIK, the majority of people are able to pass a drivers license test without glasses or contacts. Many patients report an immediate improvement within the first day. For others, vision may be blurry during the healing period. Since an individual's situation, healing powers and tissues are unique, not everyone should expect to achieve full visual correction. People with high to severe levels of myopia or astigmatism may require another procedure to achieve the desired results. People with extremely strong glasses for example, may end up with significant correction, but still need mild to moderate strength lenses part of the time for some activities.

to be continued...

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MEDICAL AWARENESS SERIES

FOCUS: ACIDITY

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What is Acidity?

The human stomach contains gastric glands which are responsible for the proper digestion of food in it. Gastric glands achieve the digestion by secreting various acids, the chief of which is the hydrochloric acid. These acids are aided by various enzymes of the stomach in bringing about digestion. The level of acids in the human stomach is generally controlled; but for some reason if the level of acids increases beyond the normal levels, then the condition is known as acidity. Hence, acidity is the condition in which there is an excess secretion of acid within the stomach. Other names for acidity are hyperacidity or acid dyspepsia.

Why is Acidity caused?

The stomach is equipped with these acids in order to be able to digest the food. The acids are released when foods enter the stomach. However some foods are difficult to digest than the others. For such foods, the stomach needs to secrete more acids. Continuous secretions of such acids could lead to acidity in the stomach. This excessive production of acids could be made higher due to various factors. Ulcers in the stomach are one of the commonest causes in increasing

acid production. People with stomach cancers will also have acidity problems as one of the symptoms. For this reason, acidity should not be ignored if it lasts for a long period of time, or if the person is older. There is a condition known as the acid-reflux complex, due to which the stomach acids are refluxed back to the food pipe. When this happens, a prominent sour taste is felt in the mouth, and a belch might occur.

What are the Symptoms of Acidity?

When a person has acidity in the stomach, there can be a vast difference in the kinds of symptoms observed. For some people it may be a simple bellyache, but for others, it could lead to days of restlessness with continuous cramps in the stomach. In fact restlessness is the most common symptom of acidity, followed by nausea and vomiting. There is a sour taste felt in the mouth, which is due to the excess deposition of the acids. Sometimes there are sour belches and passing off wind. Other digestive problems like constipation and indigestion will also occur. In some cases, stiffness is felt in the stomach.

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...to be continued

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