

Clearer Vision Through Cataract Surgery

Patients undergoing surgery to remove cataracts have the option to have toric lens implants placed into their eyes to treat astigmatism and improve vision.

David Walker will never forget a fateful day over 60 years ago.

"At the time, I was in training to become an electrician," he recounts. "While working in a house, a piece of porcelain insulator split my right eye wide open. It felt just like being punched. I was in a little town where there was only one ophthalmologist for fifty miles around."

Luckily for David, the cut was clean and did not become infected.

"The eye doctor later told me he had originally planned to remove that eye," David shares, "but the next morning, when he felt the eye, it had actually sealed itself closed again."



Q. JOCELYN GE, MD, PHD

To this day, David remains legally blind in his right eye, but his left eye has compensated for the loss. That incident was the first of several to affect his eyes. During military service in the South Pacific during World War II, high winds and prolonged sun exposure contributed to *pterygium*.

"It's a condition that causes an extra blood vessel to grow on the surface of the eye," he says.

Years later, another eye doctor removed the pterygium, along with the cataract in David's right eye, but this eye has stayed legally blind. David's left eye also had pterygium surgery. This provided a fix for quite a while, until David was well into his 70s. A cataract formed in his left eye, risking his ability to drive.

"My vision became so bad, I thought I was going to have to get myself a white cane and some dark glasses," says David. "I'd be reduced to walking or calling a cab."

Restoring vision

After consulting five other ophthalmologists, David finally sought out a solution at Premier Eye Clinic.

Q. Jocelyn Ge, MD, PhD, a board-certified ophthalmologist, is the medical director of Premier Eye Clinic in Port Orange, a full-service, patient-oriented facility that combines compassionate and personalized care with advanced technology.

"David is considered a monocular patient since he is essentially blind in one eye," explains Dr. Ge. "Because he could lose vision in his remaining eye, any surgery is higher risk and requires special attention."

Dr. Ge felt David was a good candidate for a toric lens implant, which

corrects astigmatism during routine cataract surgery.

"Astigmatism is a refractive error of the eye that causes blurred vision," explains Dr. Ge. "Instead of the cornea being round, it has more of a football shape. Regular astigmatism can be corrected with glasses or contact lenses."

The procedure to place the toric lens implant is not significantly longer than regular cataract surgery. Before surgery, the exact location of the patient's astigmatism is pinpointed, mapped, and measured.

"Accurate measurements are important to implanting the lens correctly and to treating the targeted astigmatism," emphasizes Dr. Ge.

In order to attain the measurements, Dr. Ge did have to help David treat issues like blepharitis and dry eye syndrome first.

"When there is not sufficient fluid in front of the eye, as in patients with dry eye syndrome, precise measurements cannot be made," says Dr. Ge. "This is crucial, because that's what I base on to select and place the lens implant."

At the time of the surgery, precise markings on the patient's eye are made to correspond to these measurements. After cataract removal, the toric lens is then placed inside the eye and aligned precisely with the markings.

Latest technology

Different types of toric lens implants are available in the US with a variety of power levels.

"Astigmatism can be mild, moderate, or severe," says Dr. Ge. "Previously, some patients with very severe astigmatism did not have toric lenses available to them. These patients would need an additional surgical procedure called *limbal relaxing incision*, also performed at the time of the cataract surgery, to completely treat their astigmatism. With the recent availability of more power levels, most patients will only need the toric lens implants for correcting astigmatism."

Dr. Ge can attest to the continued improvement of the optical technology.

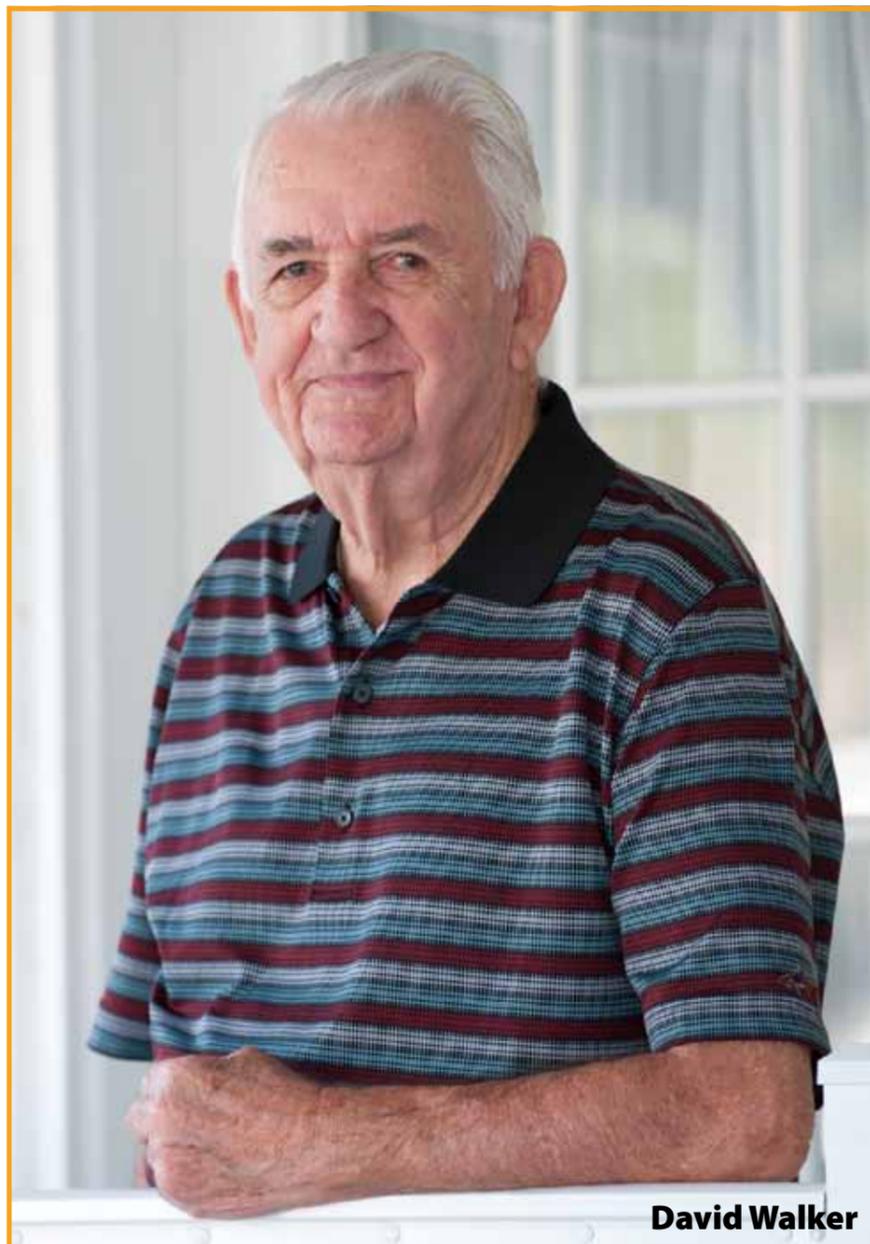
"The toric lens implant is a nice contribution to patients with cataracts and astigmatism," observes Dr. Ge. "It's also a reliable option."

David's cataract surgery at Premier Eye Clinic went smoothly.

"It was a very quick procedure," he observes. "I was astounded when Dr. Ge took the eye patch off. I looked out and I could see clearly."

Before having cataract surgery, David had to wear thick prescription eyeglasses, but now he wears only over-the-counter reading glasses called "cheaters."

"When my wife, Annamae, has the



David Walker

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David Walker has battled various eye issues for most of his life.

television on, I can see the screen and read small print," he marvels. "It makes a tremendous amount of difference!"

Dr. Ge agrees that David's treatment was successful.

"Despite having glaucoma, macular degeneration, and dry eyes, David is still able to see very well for distance out of his left eye without glasses or contacts," she reports. "Seeing patients so happy with their new vision is very gratifying."

David credits Dr. Ge with his renewed eyesight, which allows him freedom and a higher quality of life.

"Dr. Ge pays close attention to detail," says David. "She utilizes fabulous technology in her office, and really takes care of her patients." **FHCN**—Jennifer Moore

How Are Cataracts Removed?

Cataract surgery is performed on an outpatient basis and usually requires several hours of time at the facility from start to finish. The procedure itself usually takes minutes with Dr. Ge. The eye is treated with anesthetic eye drops and ointments prior to the procedure to prevent discomfort. First, a tiny incision is made in the eye, allowing Dr. Ge to use a small instrument (about the size of a pen tip) to break up and wash away the cloudy cataract. Once the cataract is removed, the lens implant is inserted through the same tiny incision and set into its permanent position.

THE FACTS:

Toric Lens Implants

- One of several varieties of Intraocular Lens Implants (IOLs)
- Typically made of acrylic or silicone
- FDA approved for cataract surgery
- Has two focus points (monofocal lenses have one focus point)
- Must be properly positioned by eye surgeon
- Benefit of lens placement during cataract surgery
- Corrects astigmatism much like eyeglasses
- Will not correct vision for reading (presbyopia) unless set for monovision focus
- Patients with macular degeneration, glaucoma, and diabetic retinopathy are also candidates for this type of IOL

Patients with cataracts and astigmatism should consult an ophthalmologist to see if they are candidates for this technology.

Committed to YOUR Vision

Dr. Ge and the staff of Premier Eye Clinic look forward to meeting readers of *Volusia Health Care News*. The office is located at **3641 South Clyde Morris Blvd., Suite 500**, in Port Orange, phone **(386) 788-6198**.



Q. Jocelyn Ge, MD, PhD, received her medical degree from the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine and her PhD from the University of California. She completed her internship at the University of Tennessee Medical Center and her ophthalmology residency at the Tulane University Hospital and Clinics in New Orleans. In 2005, Dr. Ge was one of the ten ophthalmologists in the US who received the prestigious American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS) Foundation research grant. She is active in research and has presented her results at major national conferences, including the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO), ASCRS, and the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Most recently, she received the American Medical Association's Physician Recognition Award with Commendation. She is certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology.

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