

Correcting Astigmatism During Cataract Surgery

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

Not too long ago, Esperanza Quincy could barely see her surroundings. The 67-year-old retiree discovered she had cataracts during an appointment with her eye doctor. Once employed at a company that made business signs, Esperanza now found herself unable to even see road signs.

"My vision was getting worse," shares Esperanza. "It was very difficult to see, especially at night. Even while wearing my glasses, it was never good."



Q. JOCELYN GE, MD, PHD

Esperanza's optometrist informed her that she would need surgery if the cataracts became severe.

"The last time I went to see him was in January, and he told me my cataracts were more advanced," says Esperanza. "I was given a recommendation to go see Dr. Ge."

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.

"Esperanza has been wearing glasses for many years for a significant amount of astigmatism," Dr. Ge reports. "Her vision was also getting worse from cataracts. It was especially troublesome for her to drive at night because of the glare and halo effect caused by cataracts."

It was evident that Esperanza needed cataract surgery, and Dr. Ge felt she was a good candidate for toric lens implants, which correct astigmatism.

"Astigmatism is an optical error, usually caused by either the cornea or natural lens of the eye," explains Dr. Ge. "Simply put, astigmatism causes blurriness by making the round point of incoming light oval shaped as it passes through the eye. Regular astigmatism can be corrected with glasses or contact lenses."

When a patient is diagnosed with cataracts and is planning for cataract surgery and insertion of a lens implant, this condition can actually be corrected during the surgical procedure.

"For example, if the cause of the astigmatism is in the cataract, or the clouded natural lens, then it is removed along with the cataract," explains Dr. Ge. "When the cause of the astigmatism is at the cornea, the front-most part of the eye, a toric lens



implant can often be used as a treatment."

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 implant the lens correctly and to treat the targeted astigmatism," emphasizes Dr. Ge.

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.

Improved 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," she says. "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 recent availability of more power levels, most patients will only need the toric lens implants for correcting the astigmatism at the time of cataract surgery."

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."

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

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

"It was a procedure that took just a few

minutes, and there was no pain," she says.

Esperanza noticed results immediately after her surgery.

"It's unbelievable!" she raves. "I can read and it's wonderful! I love to spend time on my computer, and I can now see things without my glasses."

"It was a procedure that took just a few minutes, and there was no pain."

About one month after her right eye surgery, Esperanza received her wish to have the left eye done, also with a toric lens implant.

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

"Before the surgery, she depended on prescription eyeglasses, mostly for significant astigmatism," says Dr. Ge. "Now, she sees very well for distance in both eyes, and only needs over-the-counter reading glasses."

Dr. Ge enjoys helping patients like Esperanza achieve their optimal vision.

"Seeing patients so happy with their new vision is very gratifying," says Dr. Ge. "At our clinic, we really take quality to heart, and we take care of each patient individually."

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.

That's why our patients are happy."

Esperanza can't agree more.

"Dr. Ge is an excellent ophthalmologist and shows concern for her patients," she says. "I would recommend Premier Eye Clinic to everyone. The whole staff is very friendly and they take extra time to answer all my questions."

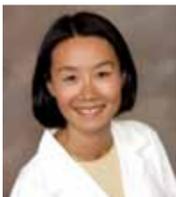
FHCN — Jennifer L. Moore

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

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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