

SCLERAL CONTACT LENSES - A NEW THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT FOR PATIENTS WITH OCULAR SURFACE DISEASE OR SEVERE DRY EYES

Patients with ocular surface irregularities or diseases can experience numerous frustrating symptoms, including blurring or distortion of their vision, discomfort or severe dryness.

Fortunately, there is a new therapeutic treatment for such conditions known as **scleral contact lenses**.



Michael Mandese, O.D.

"Having ocular surface disease causes people to experience blurriness and distortion of their vision, and is not correctable by traditional eyeglasses or contact lenses," according to Dr. Michael N. Mandese, O.D., F.A.A.O., Optometric Physician and Chief of Neuro Eye Services at The Eye Institute for Medicine & Surgery.

Until recently there were relatively few non-surgical treatment alternatives to help improve the quality of life for patients experiencing ocular discomfort or distorted vision following corneal injuries, diseases, such as keratoconus or band keratopathy, or surgical procedures that have caused corneal surface irregularity.

With the development of the latest generation of scleral contact lenses, improved vision and relief of discomfort and dryness is possible for many of these patients.

"The scleral contact lens compensates for the absence of a smooth corneal surface by providing what is, in essence, a new, enhanced ocular surface much smoother than the one that the patient presently had," states Dr. Eric R. Straut, Optometric Physician and Low Vision Specialist at The Eye Institute for Medicine & Surgery.

"This is important both for comfort and vision as the surface of the eye bends light in a way that brings images into focus," explains Dr. Straut, adding, "a smooth surface can help produce clear images, whereas a rough surface may create images that are blurry or distorted."



Eric Straut, O.D.

"The new smooth surface created by the scleral contact lens bends light in a manner that was intended to help many people optimize their visual potential and eliminate blurriness and distortion they were previously forced to endure," adds Dr. Mandese.

TREATMENT FOR DRY EYES - AN ADDITIONAL BENEFIT OF SCLERAL CONTACT LENSES

Patients with severe dry eyes, often as a result of systemic disease or the use of certain medications are another group of people who may greatly benefit from a specialized scleral contact lens fitting.



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"Patients with Sjogren's syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, sarcoid, Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, or one of many other autoimmune diseases often experience the most severe forms of dry eye syndrome," according to Dr. Straut.

"Symptoms of dry eye syndrome include severe dryness, foreign body sensation, blurring of vision, or surprisingly to many, excessive tearing," states Dr. Straut. "Patients are often surprised when I explain that the source of their excessive tearing is actually dry eye syndrome," remarked Dr. Straut.

"If your eyes feel dry, oftentimes the body attempts to compensate for this dryness by sending out more tears," explains Dr. Mandese, adding "unfortunately the quality of these tears is poor. This is why, in some cases, more and more tears are sent to the eye, leaving the patient with fluctuating vision, uncomfortable and unhappy."

"With full coverage of the eye and the lack of exposure to wind and circulating air, and with the eye being bathed in preservative free saline solution throughout the day, patients with severe dry eyes who have received a custom scleral contact lens fit often experience greatly improved comfort," states Dr. Mandese.

CUSTOM FITTING HELPS OPTIMIZE RESULTS

Using the latest technology, computerized scanning devices take multiple measurements across the surface of the eye to ensure a custom fit is made to help each patient to realize his or her maximum visual potential and ocular comfort.

"It's truly inspiring when a patient tells me that our efforts have not only improved their vision and comfort, but that their quality of life is substantially better due to the care we have provided at The Eye Institute for Medicine & Surgery," explains Dr. Straut.

A COMFORTABLE CONTACT LENS

"Compared to traditional "hard" or "gas permeable" contact lenses, the new scleral contact lenses are extremely comfortable in the eye," explains Dr. Straut.

"Unlike traditional hard or even soft lenses that move about in the eye when a person blinks, scleral contact lenses move only minimally. This absence of movement combined with a custom fitting, results in substantially improved comfort, particularly for patients with severe dry eyes," adds Dr. Mandese.

SCHEDULE A COMPREHENSIVE VISIT

Dr. Michael Mandese and Dr. Eric Straut are accepting new patients at their offices in Rockledge, Melbourne and Palm Bay. They participate with Medicare, Health First, and most other insurance plans. To schedule a consultation with either one of them, please telephone (321) 722-4443.



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