

STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION CORRECTION

Reducing or eliminating the need for glasses or contact lenses

People who are nearsighted often comment that for as long as they can remember, trying to see at a distance without their eyeglasses or contact lenses has at best, always been a struggle. This was most definitely true for Stacia Moffitt and Jessica Page. Stacia and Jessica are patients of Dr. Jason Darlington at The Eye Institute for Medicine & Surgery.



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Michael N. Mandese, OD, FAO
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Fortunately, for these two ladies, like countless other patients at The Eye Institute, when they presented with high degrees of myopia (the medical term for nearsightedness), Dr. Darlington had solutions just right for them.

"I've been wearing glasses since I was in third grade," explains Stacia, a 36-year-old mother of five. "I tried contacts for a while, but ever since I got pregnant for the first time, contacts have always irritated my eyes, and I could never really find a good fit with them.

"I finally just gave up on contacts altogether and went back to wearing glasses all the time. But I'm a nurse who works in labor and delivery, and when you're leaning over patients all day, your glasses tend to fall off sometimes. They're really a nuisance."

Jessica, who has been wearing glasses since she was eight, had similar life experiences due to her nearsightedness. Now 33, she's an Information Systems Director, whose professional responsibilities make it difficult to wear contact lenses due to dry, irritated eyes, which result from extensive computer use.

Similar to Stacia, Jessica made the decision to discontinue contact lens wear and switch to wearing glasses nearly exclusively. The glasses, however, quickly proved to be less than ideal for many of her activities and personal interests.

"I love to ride horses, but wearing glasses when horseback riding is one of the most miserable things you can imagine," Jessica states. "Having to constantly push my glasses back on my face, detracted greatly from the fun of riding."

Your Choice

Like thousands of other people, these two ladies spent years wondering what life would be like without the constant need for eyeglasses or contact lenses, but like any wise potential consumer of healthcare, both were hesitant to have permanent corrective surgery performed.

Stacia found The Eye Institute after her regular eye doctor eased her concerns about LASIK surgery and recommended Dr. Darlington. Jessica sought out an eye surgeon specializing in implantable contact lenses or ICLs, after she personally researched her vision correction options and determined that *ICLs might be the best way to correct her nearsightedness.*

"Stacia and Jessica each presented with vision that was quite similar," explains Jason K. Darlington, MD, The Director of Vision Correction at The Eye Institute. "They're both about a minus-five or a minus-six in each eye, but each one chose a different treatment to achieve the vision correction they were seeking.

"Stacia chose to have LASIK surgery. Jessica, chose implantable contact lenses to correct her vision. She liked the fact that the lens could be removed and the procedure reversed if she desired and she appreciated the studies that showed that ICLs provided a superior quality of vision with a lesser possibility of experiencing glare at night.

During LASIK surgery, a high technology laser gently reshapes the inner portion of the cornea to bring images into clear focus. The ICL procedure involves placing a special intraocular lens inside the eye. "It is like a contact lens that requires no maintenance and that never needs to be removed," explains Dr. Darlington.

"During the implantation procedure, a micro-incision is created, and the contact lens is placed in the eye by tucking it under the iris and in front of the natural lens," informs Dr. Darlington, who performs both procedures at The Eye Institute for Medicine & Surgery.

"One of the true benefits patients receive when they come to The Eye Institute for Medicine & Surgery," says Dr. Michael N. Mandese, OD, "is that Dr. Darlington has been trained to do multiple procedures. No one is pigeonholed into one option.

"What that allows us to do – and this is one of my roles in the process – is determine which procedure is best for each patient. Some people will be better candidates for LASIK, while others, for one reason or another, may be better suited for ICLs."

Part of what attracted Jessica to ICLs is that they are reversible. They can remain in the eyes indefinitely if so desired, but if there is dramatic vision change or an eye condition develops later on in life, they can be removed and replaced.

"If the patient develops a cataract fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years down the road or needs other eye surgery, ICLs can be taken out by an eye surgeon," assures Dr. Darlington, who notes that preference is not the only reason patients opt for ICLs.

"LASIK is not an option for patients who are extremely nearsighted or have thin corneas or slightly irregular corneas," he educates. "However, patients with those characteristics can still have their vision surgically corrected through ICLs.

"ICLs are also a better option for people who have chronically dry eyes or fear the possibility of developing dry eyes through refractive surgery. And some patients simply don't like the idea of having their cornea changed."



Stacia Moffitt

Better Than 20/20

Jessica, who was concerned about developing chronically dry eyes and liked the idea of an alternative to making a permanent change to her eyes, reports that the ICL procedure was easy, painless and highly effective.

"The surgery itself was relatively quick – in-and-out – and the recovery was easy," she reports. "I could see without glasses as soon as I came out of surgery, and now I've got awesome vision that I'll have for years and years without any maintenance."

Stacia, who had her LASIK surgery this past January, says her vision is better than it's ever been and she still can't believe how much easier and more enjoyable life has become for her now that she's glasses free.

"My vision is 20/15 in both eyes now, which is amazing," she says. "And I'm still amazed that every morning when I wake up, I don't have to put on my glasses to see. I'm just so thankful that I found someone I could trust to do this for me.

"As a nurse, I'm very particular about whom I see for my own health care needs, but I definitely picked the right place when I decided to have the doctors at The Eye Institute for Medicine and Surgery do my LASIK surgery.

"Everyone there is so professional and caring and understanding of your concerns. I was completely comfortable there, and I've already recommended them to people who have been thinking of getting the same procedure done. I told them, *You won't find a better place.*"

FHCN article by Roy Cummings. Photos by Nerissa Johnson. mkb



Jessica Page



Jason K. Darlington, MD, graduated with highest honors from the University of California Davis. He attended UC Davis Medical School, followed by an internship at Scripps Mercy Hospital in San Diego. He completed his residency in ophthalmology at UC Davis. His fellowship in cornea diseases, transplants, cataract surgery, and other advanced anterior segment surgery, glaucoma management and surgery, and LASIK and refractive surgery was completed at the prestigious Philips Eye Institute in Minneapolis under the direction of Thomas Samuelson, MD, and Richard Lindstrom, MD. Dr. Darlington is certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology, and he joined the staff at The Eye Institute for Medicine & Surgery in January 2015 after nine years of private practice in the Los Angeles area.



Michael N. Mandese, OD, FAO, graduated from Nova Southeastern University in 1994 and earned his medical degree from the same institution in 1996, graduating with honors. Dr. Mandese is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and is working toward diplomate status in neurological eye diseases in the American Academy of Optometry. He is the only optometric physician to have been admitted into the prestigious North American Neuro-Ophthalmology Society. He has more than 22 years of diverse experience in comprehensive medical and general eye care, including the fitting of contact lenses. He is a neuro eye disease specialist who also has experience in the diagnosis and treatment of double vision, vision loss due to stroke or traumatic brain injuries, multiple sclerosis, eye muscle imbalances, optic nerve diseases, inflammatory eye conditions, eye infections, post-surgical patient management and dry eye disease.

Comprehensive eye evaluations

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