

Monday, April 27, 2009

Ask the Doctor:

Q: Only one proven treatment for cataracts?

A: When the lens inside our eye becomes cloudy or yellow, it is called a cataract. Symptoms of early cataracts may include blurry vision, glare at night, faded colors and the need to increase light when reading at night. Assess how much your vision bothers you. If you would like to improve your vision, the only treatment for cataracts proven to be effective is cataract removal followed by a placement of a new, clear lens. Sophisticated lenses are now available to help patients see better without glasses after cataract removal.

Q: How can I treat painful dryness caused by wearing contact lenses?

A: Often referred to as dry eye syndrome, this is caused by reduced production of tears and moisture in the eyes. The result is discomfort in the eyes that ranges from moderate pain to a grainy and scratchy discomfort. Factors that cause dry eyes include excessive computer use, hormonal changes in women approaching menopause, certain medications, environmental factors such as pollution or dry windy air and contact lens wear, which is the leading cause. To know the specific causes of your dry eyes, you should consult an eye doctor; however, your options may include tear duct plugs which will limit loss of tear film, use of artificial tears or an alternative to contacts such as eyeglasses or LASIK.

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Ella G. Faktorovich, M.D., is a corneal and refractive surgeon in San Francisco and founder of the Pacific Vision Institute. Go to www.pacificvision.org for more information about clinical care and research at PVI. The questions above are commonly asked of Faktorovich. Have a question for the doctor? E-mail it to askthedrs&sfchronicle.com. Include your full name, address, town and phone number. We will answer as many as we can.



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Dr. Ella Faktorovich founded Pacific Vision Institute in 1998. Her commitment to advancing refractive options for patients has led her to be considered one California's leading ophthalmologists. She is one of the first surgeons in San Francisco to have performed LASIK vision correction. To date she has performed tens of thousands of procedures. She is listed in the Best Doctors in America and in the Top 100 Health Professionals in the World.