



Jerre Minor Freeman, MD
Thomas C. Gettelfinger, MD
James F.D. Freeman, MD
Hal B. Wright, MD
John M. Freeman, MD
W. David Irvine, MD



MECA

MEMPHIS EYE, CATARACT & LASER CENTER

6485 POPLAR AVENUE....MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

(901) 767-3937 / (800) 393-7185

The physicians and staff of MECA Eye and Laser Center have been serving patients and physicians since 1968. We have six physicians and a staff of highly trained ophthalmic assistants and nurses.

How Presbyopia or the Need For Reading Glasses Saved Our Nation

Around our late 30s to early 40s, many of us are bothered by reading material becoming blurry. We say "our arms are too short" as we push objects further away to focus them more clearly. People need reading glasses because the internal eye muscles are ineffective in manipulating the lens of the eye to allow us to focus at near. Don't feel too bad when it happens to you. Everyone – and I mean everyone – from kings to peasants, will experience this loss of near-focusing ability. It is called presbyopia, literally, old vision. So, what does this have to do with saving our nation?

General George Washington had been a steadfast leader during the early years of the United States of America. In addition to leading a courageous band of soldiers through many battles with the British, George Washington had also 'battled' weak, support from the Continental Congress. His soldiers



asked, "Why should these ineffectual leaders in Philadelphia continue to rule our country when their leadership in the war was so weak and the support of their warriors so poor?"

General Washington was aware of these thoughts and knew that a great deal rested on his final address to the troops on March 15, 1783. His goals were to thank the soldiers, prevent a potential mutiny and to save our nation for democracy. He saved the most stirring part of his speech for last, which he read to them because he did not fully trust his memory for so important a message. He reached into his coat pocket and brought out his reading glasses and said, "As I have served by

(Continued on page 2)

Fungal Keratitis and Contact Lens Care

Earlier this year multiple sources reported an outbreak of the fungal eye infection associated with soft contact lens use across the country and internationally. Most cases were fusarium keratitis which is a rare but serious fungal infection of the cornea that can cause permanent vision loss if left untreated. An association between Bausch and Lomb's *ReNu with MoisturLoc* contact solution was found in approximately 80% of the cases and the product has been pulled from shelves. More than 100 cases of this infection have been reported in the United States since June, 2005, according to the CDC. It does not appear that there was a contamination of the contact lens solution; instead, researchers believe that the solution somehow increased the likelihood of fusarium contamination from the environment.

At M.E.C.A. we have seen one case of fusarium keratitis, and we want to raise awareness in the medical community and the community at large about this infection. The following recommendations are given for any contact lens users.

1. Stop wearing contract lenses and seek out medical eye care if any of the following symptoms occur. Early diagnosis and treatment of infectious keratitis gives the best chance of reducing permanent vision loss.
 - Sudden blurred vision
 - Unusual redness
 - Pain in your eye
 - Increased light sensitivity
 - Excessive tearing or discharge of the eye
2. Review the following guidelines for contact lens use.
 - a. Don't sleep in your contacts. Those who sleep in their contacts are 19 times more likely to

(Continued on page 2)



(Continued from page 1)

Presbyopia

your side, you and I have grown old together in the service of our country, and I have grown blind.” He then read, “You have fought valiantly. Yes, you have fought courageously. You have fought loyally” As he read these final words with the aid of his reading glasses, he touched every heart, every mind, and every eye of the assembled officers. All thoughts of mutiny died away.

Unity had been salvaged by a courageous General, who faced adversity of battle and paucity of sight with grace and dignity.....and with a little help from reading glasses.

(Continued from page 1)

Keratitis

develop corneal infections.

- b. Consider daily disposable contact lenses. Daily disposable contact lens essentially avoid environmental contaminant build-up.
- c. If wearing extended wear contact lenses, change out the lenses according to the manufacturer’s recommendations.
- d. Handle contacts only with clean hands and use fresh contact lens cleaning solutions.
- e. Completely change the contact lens solutions in the storage cases, i.e. do not just “top-off” the cases. Change the storage case at least every 2 months.
- d. Do not swim in contact lenses or wash contact lenses in tap water.

Emerging Trends in Refractive Surgery

Since the inception of laser eye surgery in the mid 1980s, technology has tremendously improved ophthalmologists’ ability to correct refractive errors. The excimer laser used in refractive surgery emits a beam so precise it could cut notches in a human hair and not break it. Two common procedures, LASIK and PRK (photo-refractive keratectomy) have revolutionized the way common refractive errors such as myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness) and astigmatism are treated. While there are risks involved, as with any surgery, they are rare.

PRK treats refractive errors by removing tissue from the surface of the cornea. The eye is completely numbed by anesthetic eye drops, then the surgeon gently removes the epithelium with a brush or instrument. The laser then ablates the proper amount of tissue to reshape the surface of the cornea. The healing time is longer with PRK, about four days with mild, hazy vision, while a protective contact lens is used to minimize discomfort.

LASIK is a procedure whereby a thin layer of the cornea is raised by a microkeratome to make a flap which exposes the stroma. Targeted tissue is removed with a laser and the flap is replaced. The entire procedure is over in less than 10 minutes. Healing time ranges from a few hours to one day.

Medical director of MECA Surgery Center, Dr. James Freeman, prefers the PRK procedure to LASIK for most patients because of the complications that can arise from the flap made in the LASIK procedure such as microscopic wrinkles or striae from accidental rubbing or bumping the eye.

“The laser is so good now, that the biggest source of optical issues is the flap,” he explains. “The advantage of LASIK is a much quicker recovery but PRK is safer and better in the long term.” A study by the U.S. Navy showed PRK patients did better in the long term than those with LASIK. In fact, the U.S. Navy offers free PRK surgery to naval academy students who intend to pursue career paths requiring perfect uncorrected vision, including flight school and special forces training.

JERRE MINOR FREEMAN, MD
HAL B. WRIGHT, MD

THOMAS C. GETTELFINGER, MD
JOHN F. FREEMAN, MD

JAMES F. FREEMAN, MD
W. DAVID IRVINE, MD