

BC Now Easier On the Eyes: Valley Laser Eye Centre Goes 'Blade-free'

Surgeons choose 'Blade-free' IntraLase LASIK procedure for greater safety and better vision

BRITISH COLUMBIA, May 25th, 2006 - The world's safest and most advanced LASIK vision correction technology – the blade-free IntraLase Method™ – is now available to British Columbia residents looking to optimize visual results without the risks associated with the microkeratome (or surgical blade), traditionally used to create the corneal flap before each LASIK procedure. Valley Laser Eye Centre and many other premium refractive centres across Canada now offer the IntraLase Method in place of the microkeratome, in order to enhance the safety and precision of the LASIK procedure and provide more patients with 20/20 vision or better.*

"We now know that the corneal flap plays a significant role in the visual outcomes of the LASIK procedure", says Dr. John Blaylock, Medical Director and owner of Valley Laser Eye Centre. "With the silent, computer-guided IntraLase FS laser, we can now precisely shape the corneal flap, resulting in predictably safer and improved visual outcomes for our LASIK patients", he added. "The increased safety significantly reduces patient fear during the procedure", he said. IntraLase is among the fastest-growing refractive surgical techniques in the world. More than 600,000 LASIK procedures worldwide have employed the IntraLase Method. And, it is estimated that 30 percent of all Canadian LASIK procedures will be performed with the IntraLase Method by the end of 2006.

With the improved safety and outcomes reported throughout Canada and the United States, "IntraLase LASIK will soon be the new standard of care in BC", believes Dr. Blaylock. As well, more PRK candidates will likely choose IntraLase LASIK because of its high safety profile, biomechanical stability, and added benefits of comfort and a faster visual recovery. And while improved safety is the primary reason why many patients will switch to IntraLase, recent clinical studies are indicating better visual outcomes as well.

In a recent unsponsored study by the US Navy (San Diego Naval Medical Center), Dr. Steve Schallhorn – a prominent LASIK and PRK surgeon – compared the visual outcomes of the IntraLase femtosecond (FS) laser technology with bladed microkeratomes. The purpose of the study was to determine which method was best for Naval aviators. Dr. Schallhorn presented his findings at this year's CSCRS meeting in Toronto, where he reported the FS laser as being a "much more precise instrument". Patients treated with the femtosecond laser, he said, had "better visual acuity [UCVA]" and "significantly better quality of vision", as well as a faster recovery period.* These are three good reasons, Dr. Schallhorn believes, why they will likely use the femtosecond laser on naval aviators in the near future.

"IntraLase is a significant advancement in improving the quality of vision for patients considering either LASIK or PRK ", commented Dr. Blaylock. "And with the improved accuracy and ability to individually customize each flap, we can now offer the LASIK procedure to a wider array patients who were previously considered non-candidates", he added.

How The IntraLase Laser Works

The ultra-fast IntraLase FS femtosecond (fem-to-second) laser creates a corneal flap of precise depth, diameter and centration using an infrared beam. The silent beam of laser light is focused to a precise point within the stroma (central layer of the cornea) where each pulse of the laser creates a tiny 2- to 3-micron bubble of carbon dioxide and water vapour. Thousands of these microscopic bubbles are precisely positioned to define the flap's dimensions, as well as the location of the hinge. Bubbles are then stacked along the edge of the flap up to the corneal surface to complete the flap. The process takes approximately 15-20 seconds per eye. The surgeon then lifts the flap to allow for treatment by the excimer laser. When treatment is complete, the flap is repositioned.

- Data on file, IntraLase Corp

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