



Pinellas Health Care News

a publication of Florida Health Care News, Inc.

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OPHTHALMOLOGY/OPTOMETRY

Jean Thompson revels in maintaining an interesting and active lifestyle.

She wasn't about to let the rising eye pressure of glaucoma interrupt that lifestyle, which includes occasionally extended travel plans.

"My regular eye doctor, Dr. David Hall, diagnosed my glaucoma a little over a year ago," relates Jean. "At my most recent eye examination, he determined that my eye pressure warranted treatment with medicated eye drops.

"I used them for about a week, but they were such a nuisance," says Jean. "I was getting ready for a lengthy trip, and even though I had no problem remembering my dosing schedule, I really didn't want to have to deal with eye drops every day if there was a better solution available. Dr. Hall keeps current with all the newest approved treatments, and he told me about a laser procedure that had a 70 percent success rate in reducing eye fluid pressure, so I decided to pursue that option."

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Pasadena EYE CENTER

DAVID E. HALL, MD • NATHAN R. EMERY, MD
DENNIS C. RYCZEK, OD

Expanding the options in the fight against G.L.A.U.C.O.M.A

DROPPING OUT. Jean's eye-fluid pressure is under control, without medicated eye drops, thanks to SLT performed by Dr. Hall.

PHOTO BY NERISSA JOHNSON

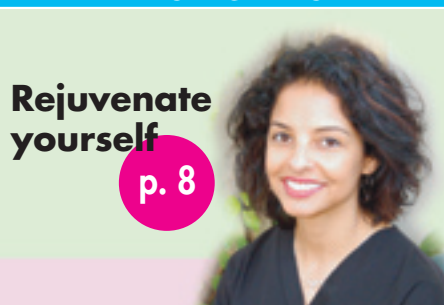
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GLAUCOMA

(continued from page 1)

David E. Hall, MD, is a board-certified ophthalmologist with years of experience in helping people solve a number of ophthalmic challenges, including glaucoma. The procedure he suggested for Jean was selective laser trabeculoplasty (SLT).

Dr. Hall explains that glaucoma is often characterized by an increase in intraocular pressure.

An intricate system of tiny canals, the *trabecular meshwork*, provides passage for the fluid that builds up inside the eye. This drainage system helps maintain proper eye fluid pressure by removing excess fluid. Glaucoma develops when the eye fluid is prevented

from leaving the eye quickly enough. When the fluid pressure inside the eye goes up, it exerts pressure on the optic nerve and destroys vision-carrying nerve fibers.

Conservative treatment for glaucoma involves the use of medicated eye drops, but Dr. Hall points out that for active patients like Jean, these drops can interrupt the day; prescriptions may be difficult to fill when patients travel.

Drops can also be expensive, especially if patients require multiple medications, or multiple doses per day, each on a different schedule, to keep their eye fluid pressure under control. Dr. Hall also notes that these medications may cause side effects.

Aggressive options

In the past, patients who found the daily dosing schedule placed too great a burden on their lifestyles or their finances might be scheduled, instead, for a more aggressive treatment: surgical trabeculectomy.

This surgery creates new drainage passages in the trabecular meshwork, but, like any surgery, it poses risks, including the formation of scar tissue that can impede the drainage of excess fluids.

The advent of argon laser trabeculoplasty (ALT) offered a noninvasive means of increasing the efficiency of the eye's drainage system, but, like trabeculectomy, its thermal energy can create adhesions that impede drainage. This precludes performing the procedure more than twice in each eye, leaving patients dependent

SLT:

a new first-line defense?

"Traditionally, eye-drop medications have formed our first line of defense against glaucoma," says Dr. Hall. "With the development of repeatable, non-scarring SLT, laser trabeculoplasty is now being considered as an initial treatment to avoid placing patients on a medication regimen while still providing long-term control of intraocular pressure."

Dr. Hall notes that SLT is also effective for patients who have previously been treated with ALT. "In one study, 66 percent of patients who had already experienced full argon laser treatment — making them ineligible for further treatments with that laser and therefore more reliant on eye-drop medications — achieved a lowering of their intraocular pressure following treatment with SLT."

Dr. Hall suggests SLT for patients who are on a single glaucoma medication that fails to control their eye fluid pressure. It can take the place of one medication when a patient is on several drops.

It is also a good option for patients who are not able to tolerate eye-drop medication for any reason or for those who find it difficult to comply with their dosing schedule.

"SLT is no panacea," comments Dr. Hall, "but it gives us another tool that we can use in helping our patients control glaucoma, without the adverse side effects of medications or the potential problems of postsurgical scarring."

"I am pleased to offer this advanced procedure to my glaucoma patients."

once again upon eye drop medications.

SLT addresses these concerns.

"Selective laser trabeculoplasty offers hope for an effective, repeatable treatment for glaucoma patients, giving us another powerful tool in the fight against glaucoma," describes Dr. Hall.

The procedure works by applying a cold laser light that selectively targets pigmented cells in the trabecular meshwork.

"The laser works quickly," says Dr. Hall, "applying its energy over a wide area. This means we can avoid causing thermal damage to healthy tissue."

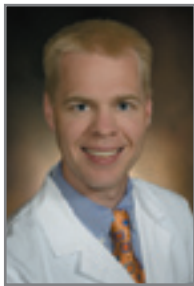
"Examinations of SLT treated eyes, viewed with an electron microscope, show no difference in comparison to untreated, healthy tissue."

"This offers hope that it may be possible to perform SLT multiple times in each eye to help keep eye pressure under control."

Dr. Hall notes that SLT is performed in the doctor's office and that its effects can last from six months to several years, with 50% of patients experiencing lowered intraocular pressure for approximately five years.



David E. Hall, MD, is a board-certified ophthalmologist. He graduated from the University of Mississippi and received his medical degree from the University of Tennessee College of Medicine. He completed his internship at Erlanger Hospital and his residency in ophthalmology at the University of Tennessee. He is a diplomate of the American Board of Ophthalmology and is a member of the Florida Medical Association, Pinellas County Medical Society, American Academy of Ophthalmology, and American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgeons. He is on staff at Palms of Pasadena Hospital and HealthSouth St. Petersburg Surgery Center.



Nathan R. Emery, MD, is a board-certified ophthalmologist. He completed his undergraduate studies at Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, before serving a two-year mission in England. Upon his return to the United States, he completed his medical degree at the Chicago Medical School in Illinois. He served his internship at Resurrection Medical Center, Chicago, and completed his residency at the University of South Florida, Tampa. Dr. Emery is a diplomate of the American Board of Ophthalmology and is a member of the Pinellas County Medical Society, American Academy of Ophthalmology, and the American Society of Cataract & Refractive Surgeons. He is on staff at Palms of Pasadena Hospital and HealthSouth St. Petersburg Surgery Center.



Dennis C. Ryczek, OD, is a Florida-certified optometrist. He attended St. Petersburg Junior College and the University of South Florida. He graduated summa cum laude with a doctorate in optometry from the University of Houston, TX, and completed his externship at Hermann Hospital, Houston. Dr. Ryczek has received extensive training in primary eye care, including pre- and postoperative care for cataract and refractive procedures. He currently serves as a clinical investigator for both Johnson & Johnson's Vistakon Division and Bausch & Lomb and is a member of the American Optometric Association, Florida Optometric Association, Pinellas County Optometric Association, and American Optometric Association's contact lens section.

When Jean found her eye-drop medications to be too cumbersome, Dr. Hall suggested SLT to improve the drainage system within Jean's eyes.

"Was I nervous? Not at all," assures Jean.

"I had entrusted my eye care to Dr. Hall for a number of years. He had performed my cataract surgery, and he's an excellent surgeon. I trusted him in this, too, so I scheduled the SLT."

Good results

Dr. Hall performed SLT for Jean in January 2007.

"It was completely painless," confirms Jean, "and it was accomplished in a matter of minutes."

Jean experienced the lowering of her intraocular pressure as Dr. Hall expected.

"A follow-up exam shortly after my procedure confirmed that my eye pressure was down," says Jean. "Dr. Hall and SLT have simplified my glaucoma treatment — and my travels."

FHCN—Billie S. Noakes

Envision great results

Pasadena Eye Center offers leading-edge comprehensive eye care. For additional information or to schedule an appointment, please call the office, located at **6950 Central Ave., Suite 120**, in St. Petersburg, at **(727) 343-3004**. Pasadena Eye Center also offers the services of a top-rated optical shop, which can be reached directly by calling **(727) 347-9648**.

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