

I'm only 50...Is that too Young To Be Thinking About Premium Lenses and Laser Cataract Surgery?

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For over 50 years, surgeons have been treating cataracts by surgically replacing the clouded lens in the eye. Today, cataract surgery is considered one of the safest and most effective procedures in medicine. But for many people having a cataract is something they consider to occur in "older" people or later in life. Therefore, at 50, many don't consider it something to research or learn about. At the Vision Correction Center at New England Eye Center in Boston, we choose to educate patients about cataracts at the age of 50. Around this time the lens is already beginning to change and the doctors want patients to be aware of the many vision correction options now available.

It is important to our physicians that you "know your options." LASIK is no longer the only vision correction choice out there. With so many advancements in eyecare, the options can be overwhelming. The options include not only the tried and true LASIK procedure, Visian ICL, also known as an implantable contact lens, but also Premium Lenses and now Laser Cataract Surgery with the Opti-

medica® Catalys Laser. Researching your options before it is time to make a decision, will help you prepare for your future visual needs financially and emotionally. Some of these procedures require an out of pocket expense in addition to what is typically covered by insurance. Therefore, planning ahead and preparing to choose your best options is key to being happy with your long term vision.

As we age, our bodies go through drastic changes, and our eyes are no exception. The natural lenses of our eyes are responsible for capturing an image, focusing it on the retina, and sending it to the brain. They are what shape the colorful imagery of our lives. Over time, the proteins in these lenses clump together, causing a clouding known as cataracts. When you suffer from cataracts, your entire life can lose its color. Reading may become more difficult. Driving a car can actually become dangerous. Often you can be bothered by glare, halos around lights, sometime even double vision. As a cataract matures, more frequent changes in eyeglass prescrip-

tions may become necessary. If your vision seems blurred or hazy, light seems glaring, or colors are more dull than usual, you could have a cataract. The only true way to determine what is really going on with your vision is to schedule an eye exam. Regardless of your visual changes, we recommend you keep yourself up to date with an annual eye exam.

Currently there is no way to prevent the development of cataracts and there is no age that guarantees when a cataract will form. Fortunately, New England Eye Center, offers a procedure that can permanently and dramatically improve your vision after cataract surgery allowing you the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the world in full color and high contrast. Premium IOLs or what also may be referred to as "Advanced or Lifestyle Lenses" can be an option during cataract surgery and can provide you with a depth and clarity of vision that can truly enhance your life. The selection of implantable lenses now available includes choices to allow you to see at multiple distances, often without the need for glasses after

cataract surgery.

Advancements in vision correction have continued to offer a new level of safety and precision when performing cataract surgery and New England Eye Center has available to patients the option of upgrading to laser Cataract Surgery with the Catalys Precision Laser System. Dr. Helen Wu and Dr. Dan Hu, both cornea trained, refractive surgeons, offer a comprehensive range of vision correction options for patients from 18 and up and have made available this technology to many of their cataract patients. We recently asked Dr. Hu, who practices in both Framingham and Boston, why he prefers to use the Catalys™ Laser when performing cataract surgery and he did his best to summarize for us: Catalys™ laser assisted cataract surgery is the latest advancement in cataract technology. It provides unprecedented precision in the capsulotomy as well as astigmatic incisions. When choosing the laser (over traditional methods), patients have less swelling of the eye and less inflammation which will allow for very rapid recovery from surgery. This pro-

vides for more predictable outcomes and quicker visual recovery. When used in combination with a Lifestyle Lens, will allow for greater independence from glasses after your cataract surgery."

Interestingly, we do find more often, of our patients who choose to upgrade to a premium lens and/or laser cataract surgery, they tend to be very active, social and younger than many people realize. People are living better and longer and they owe it to themselves to have the best vision to enjoy their life. Cataracts can start at any time and knowing your options early on will help you make a decision when the time comes. Not everyone needs or qualifies for elective surgery, premium lenses or laser cataract surgery and it is most important to schedule an eye exam with your eye care provider to learn more about what procedure and option is best for you. You can learn more about vision correction options and all of our cornea trained physicians at www.mylasikdoc.com and www.neec.com or by calling 1-617-636-7800 and speaking to one of our vision correction counselors.

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