

NEWSLETTER - WINTER 2001 / SPRING 2002

Why Us?

By Dr. I. Howard Fine, M.D.



Drs. Fine, Hoffman,
and Packer with office staff.

With so many ophthalmologists easily available within a small geographic area we are frequently asked “Why should anyone choose a particular ophthalmologist or practice for their cataract surgery?” In responding to this question we thought we should make a statement about what differentiates us from all other practices - not only within our own geographic area, but nationally and internationally as well. Ultimately, we feel that our renown stems from the fact that our practice strives to provide unsurpassed patient care in combination with the most technologically advanced approach to cataract surgery that there is to offer.

Successful cataract surgery is the product of these main ideals along with many other elements that continue to set this practice apart from all others. While it is common knowledge that Drs. Fine, Hoffman, and Packer offer the most advanced small incision cataract techniques, you may not be aware that many of these techniques were developed by us at the Oregon Eye Surgery Center and are rapidly becoming the cataract techniques of choice throughout the world.

Besides meticulous surgical technique, one of the most important elements for a successful surgical outcome is the preoperative measurement of eye length which is used to calculate the lens implant for your eye. We have both the Zeiss IOL Master and Quantel Immersion biometry available to insure the most precise preoperative measurements for intraocular lens calculations. Most practices use only one device for these measurements, not two, and none in our area are utilizing these more advanced machines.

Our results are constantly evaluated and refined using sophisticated software programs. These programs update our lens power calculations by analyzing postoperative outcomes and making fine alterations in our formulas to maximize accuracy. It is because of these continued refinements and precise measurements that we are able to offer some of the most accurate lens power determinations in the world.

Most ophthalmologists utilize intraocular lens implants of the same design, material, and manufacturer for all of their patients. We customize the lens implant for each patient, altering not only the power but also the design and biocompatible material based on each patient's unique ophthalmic anatomy, pathology, and postoperative visual requirements. We utilize small incision foldable lenses that not only eliminate nearsightedness and farsightedness, but can also reduce astigmatism and treat presbyopia to reduce your dependence on glasses for near as well as distance vision.

We are one of a select group of practices that are continually involved in the research and clinical investigation of the latest intraocular lens designs and cataract removal technologies. Due to our relationship with the ophthalmic industry, we are able to offer some of the most advanced and safest cataract surgery technology and the most advantageous intraocular lens designs to our patients many years before they become available to the general public. These include new multifocal and accommodative lenses that provide both near and distance correction as well as the newest intraocular refractive lenses for our elective surgery patients.

We make an extra effort to perfect the postoperative refractive error so that a larger percentage of our patients have the best possible distance vision without glasses. This is accomplished not only by eliminating nearsightedness and farsightedness but also by reducing astigmatism with the placement of corneal astigmatic incisions (when appropriate) at the time of cataract surgery. This additional technique is guided by sophisticated computerized maps of the surface contour of the eye to insure the best possible result. Many practices do not treat astigmatism at the time of cataract removal, but we try to utilize every means possible to improve the surgical outcome.

Perhaps the most important element of our practice that sets us apart from others is our staff. Our highly skilled technicians are constantly upgrading their expertise through continued education at national meetings. They are continually studying for higher levels of certification and many have achieved the highest level of training for ophthalmic technicians in the country.

We are most fortunate to be able to operate at the Oregon Eye Surgery Center, a world-renowned facility dedicated to state-of-the-art eye surgery. It is staffed with a superb team of highly trained nurses and technicians. Unbelievable as it may seem, the Oregon Eye Surgery Center has more cataract removal technology than any hospital or teaching institution in the entire world. Ophthalmologists from all over the world attest to this when they come here to learn the latest techniques and observe the newest technology in action.

Eyes on Brazil

By Richard S. Hoffman, MD



Richard S. Hoffman, M.D.

A recently had the honor of participating in the 25th Moacyr Alvaro International Ophthalmology Symposium in São Paulo, Brazil. I was asked to give three talks including a prestigious presentation at the opening session. I found the Brazilian ophthalmologists to be extremely friendly and appreciative of foreign physicians traveling to their country to demonstrate the newest techniques and technologies.

I was chaperoned throughout my stay by one or more of the ophthalmology fellows training at the Federal University. They were unbelievably helpful ensuring my trip was comfortable and safe. On the first day, I presented our practice's work on the Implantable Miniaturized Telescope (IMT). The opening session was followed by a cocktail hour and dinner. Dinner in Brazil is much later than in the U.S. and didn't start until midnight. (The Americans in the group were quite hungry by then!)



São Paulo's infamous Brazilian barbecues

My presentations the following day included an interactive video session titled “Difficult and Challenging Cases in Cataract Surgery.” It was wonderful to be able to offer so much useful information to the Brazilians. They were eager to learn and it was enlightening to see that many of their ophthalmologists were practicing at a technical level that was close to that of U.S. surgeons.

Later we had an authentic Brazilian dinner followed by a wonderful Samba show. It was a spectacular concert with a twelve-piece band featuring a renowned Brazilian singer. I was also able to visit one of São Paulo’s infamous Brazilian barbecues. These are elegant restaurants whose waiters continuously bring grilled Brazilian beef to your table, carving off slices of all of the tastiest cuts way beyond the point where common sense tells the patron to stop eating.

São Paulo is an exotic bustling city of 22 million ethnically diverse, beautiful and kind people moving to the invisible rhythms of Samba drums in the tropical afternoon summer rains. In all, it was a wonderful adventure and I look forward to returning to Brazil. My stay there was much too short.

Refractions

What is a refraction?

The refraction is the portion of your eye exam that measures your ability to see an object at a specific distance. Our technicians perform refractometry. From the

exam chair you look through the phoropter toward an eye chart. The phoropter contains lenses of different strengths and types that can be moved into view. Our technicians will ask you which view is clearer as they place different lenses in front of the eye (“Better one or better two?”). When you are able to read the chart most clearly, the technician makes note of the lenses used. This process takes time and patience due to the interaction required for the most accurate outcome.

Why is the test performed?

A refraction is not just for an eyeglass prescription, although a new prescription is often the byproduct of a refraction. The refraction is a critical part of any eye examination. It helps the doctor determine whether your vision is reduced by a medical eye disease (such as cataract, macular degeneration, etc), and helps the doctor follow the progression of cataracts and other conditions.

When you experience, or we measure a change in vision, a refraction is necessary to determine the extent of visual change and possible reason. When the refraction is complete, the doctor compares the new information obtained to your vision with your current glasses. This helps determine whether or not vision changes are due to a need for a new glasses prescription or to a possible medical problem that needs further exploration.

Will your insurance pay for it?

Refraction has always been a non-covered service under the Medicare program. Medicare does not differentiate between “medical refractions” (as described above) and refractions performed solely for the purpose of providing glasses. As a result of Medicare not covering refractions, your secondary insurance to Medicare may also deny the charge. Our practice will submit this charge to Medicare on your behalf so that it can then be forwarded on to your secondary insurance carrier.

Other insurance plans vary depending on your individual benefit coverage. In our experience, unless you have vision benefit coverage your insurance will probably not cover the cost of refraction. Our practice will submit this charge to your insurance carrier on your behalf whether they cover the charge or not.

Please note that our refraction fee is \$45. If you know this charge will not be paid by your insurance carrier we ask that you make the payment at the time of service. If you have any questions about refractions, please don’t hesitate to call our office.

**“My Life Has Been Changed Forever”
by Kevin “KJ” Waltz, KDUK Air Personality**



Wow! It's been just over a month since I underwent the LASIK procedure performed by Dr. Packer to correct my nearsightedness. I am not exaggerating when I say my life has been changed forever.

When I left the office immediately after the surgery and could read the stop sign across the street, I knew something incredible had happened to me. I could go on about the many areas of my daily life that have been impacted by this simple procedure and the joy I have felt this month, but I'd like to specifically mention two.

I have not been able to swim with clear vision since the age of twelve. A couple of weeks after the surgery I went to a birthday party at Splash! in Springfield and, for the first time in 22 years, enjoyed a day of playing in the water without a care in the world. I was a kid again and it felt great.

As a lover of nature, the sport of snow skiing has become an important activity for my overall sense of well-being. However, in cold temperatures eyeglasses would freeze to my face and my contacts would stick to my eyes. After LASIK, this winter I've been able to fully enjoy the experience of skiing visually unencumbered for the very first time.

I will never take for granted the miracle of being able to see clearly now. What Dr. Packer and your staff have done for me has been a blessing in ways too numerous to count. The only way I can thank you is to proudly share my story with others.

"What a Wonderful Experience "
By Debra Ellingboe



Life was a blur without contacts before my LASIK surgery with Dr. Fine. I decided to have monovision LASIK surgery and now I couldn't be happier. This past Saturday I not only saw the Ducks win but I could also see the lines on the field and read the program! It was also great to be able to read the players' numbers as they contributed to a Duck victory. I just wanted to thank you for a wonderful experience.