

Safety Above All Else

Patient satisfaction is at an all-time high. But for Focus surgeons, maintaining corneal structural integrity is what makes Intralase SBK 'such a good option for patients'.

Consistency. It's what we all strive for, whether we are business people or athletes, accountants or lawyers, teachers or healthcare providers. So why would a Laser Vision Correction centre that had been getting consistently outstanding visual results for patients for the better part of 20 years to decide to offer something — *anything* — different?

"We weren't looking for a change," says Dr. David Edmison, Focus Eye's Medical Director and founder, "but we remain committed to always exploring the best options and advances in striving for the best visual results for our patients. Intralase SBK represents such a good option for patients. We are able to remove and maintain viability of a thin film of epithelium with a high level of precision, providing structural integrity and a comfortable, quick recovery."

So, back in 2009, Focus went from offering only PRK to introducing SBK, with no expectation of which procedure patients would prefer.

Today both procedures are considered by Focus Surgeons to be 'Standard of Care', although over time SBK has become a popular option with Focus Eye's patient base. So much so that Intralase SBK has become the most attractive option for the majority of patients who qualify.

From the patient's perspective, the results since then have been truly impressive. Recovery times are typically much shorter than with PRK, incidences of discomfort are rare, and visual outcomes often produce a level of

vision that exceeds what people enjoyed with either glasses or contact lenses.

Focus Eye's surgeons, the most attractive feature of Intralase SBK can be summed up in a single word: Safety. "The reality is that with Lasik the incision is deep in the non-healing part of the cornea, at approximately 160-180 microns, whereas with SBK the separation is at 90-110 microns from the surface where healing does take place," Dr. Edmison explains. (See graphic.)

Intralase SBK (Sub-Bowman's Keratomileusis) is, by definition, performed just below Bowman's membrane rather than Lasik that require a deeper pass through the corneal structure. It's also significant that Intralase SBK is a two-step procedure that uses lasers for flap-creation and refractive correction. The first laser creates an ultra-thin flap, after which a cool-beam laser addresses the patient's refractive error. When treatment is complete, the flap is accurately repositioned by the surgeon, thanks to the flap's uniquely bevelled edge.

"With Intralase SBK, surgeons [are] protecting corneal structural integrity."

"With [Intralase SBK] technology, surgeons may now precisely dissect corneal tissue, while also protecting corneal integrity," wrote Professor John Marshall, PhD, of King's College, University of London, in *Cataract & Refractive Surgery Today*.

"To determine what type of laser refractive surgery had the most minimal impact on the cornea, my colleagues... and I compared various cornea flap creation methods... and found the Intralase FS [femtosecond] laser to be the best method to create a sub-Bowman's flap, because of its ability to precisely customize the depth and diameter of the flap with excellent predictability," reported Dr. Marshall in 2007.

It took almost two years from these initial, positive reports before Focus surgeons — including Dr. Edmison, Dr. John Cheung and Dr. Claude Menard — had seen and gathered



Dr. David Edmison, Medical Director, Focus Eye Centre

enough hard clinical data to be convinced that Intralase SBK was a worthy complement to the PRK procedures that most Focus patients had undergone up to that time.

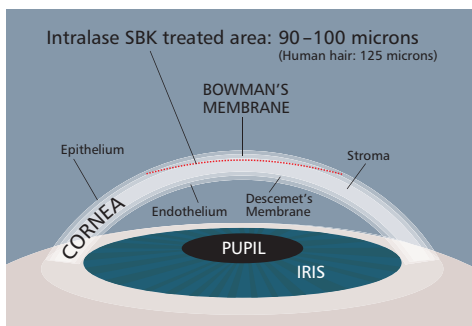
"We still offer Wavefront PRK and the results are excellent," explains Dr. Edmison. "However, Intralase SBK coupled with a Wavefront procedure provides a quicker recovery time for vision getting to optimized results."

Patients of Laser Vision Correction routinely and excitedly speak about their results. "It's amazing to be able to wake up and see the alarm clock." "I can play sports without the hassles of glasses or contacts." "I can wrestle with my kids and don't have to worry about getting my glasses knocked off my face or my lenses being broken."

Such results — often quick, and usually with a minimum of discomfort — have grown the enthusiasm for Intralase SBK. Focus Eye staff understand and value this. "Many of our patients are seeing better than 20/20, and almost everyone we treat with Intralase SBK enjoys a level of visual acuity that exceeds what they ever had with glasses or contact lenses," says Nancy Bast, Coordinator, Patient Services for Focus Eye.

But Drs. Edmison, Cheung and Menard see things through a slightly different lens. For them, results are extremely important, but patient safety comes first.

"It's the ability to maintain the corneal structural integrity that won us over to SBK [in comparison with Lasik] in the first place," says Dr. Edmison, "and it's still of paramount importance today." With both PRK and Intralase SBK we are striving to provide all of our patients with optimal outcomes, with a focus on maintaining corneal structural integrity



Pro Vision

Eric O'Dell has been through a lot in his 21 years, including heart surgery in 2010 to repair a hole in his right atrium. But the Winnipeg Jets prospect (he was originally drafted by the Anaheim Ducks in 2008, as the 39th overall pick in the NHL draft) isn't complaining. Rather, when *InFocus* caught up with the Ottawa native who started playing hockey when he was five years old, he was in the throes of intense off-season training in advance of the rink doors opening on rookie camp this Fall.



This past Summer, in addition to plenty of skating, dry-land workouts and plenty of time in the gym (O'Dell is smallish for an NHL forward at 6' and 185 pounds), Eric ducked in to Focus Eye in July for a Laser Vision Correction (LVC) procedure that he expects will give him an edge on the ice.

InFocus asked him about overcoming a heart defect and life after lenses. But first, Eric told us about growing up in a hockey family.

"I am one of three children: I have a sister who is 26 and a brother who's 24. I'm the youngest. I started playing hockey when I was about five years old for the West-End Wolverines and got put into hockey because my brother played and my dad loved the sport. I played soccer during the summers and got really good at it [but] decided to give it up at age 16 because I always had my mind set on playing hockey — and I realized how big hockey is in Canada."

"I'm property of the Winnipeg Jets and all prospects are invited to [training] camp, which starts at the beginning of September. I was living at home in Ottawa for the summer and training five times a week at the Ottawa 67's Sports Conditioning Centre to get into the best shape I can for the upcoming season."

**"I knew LVC would be the best decision for my career and vision."
— Eric O`Dell**

"If you ask me about my goal, I'd say I hope I make it to the NHL and have a long successful career. But it takes hard work on and off the ice to become a stronger player — from working on your strength in the gym, to working on your skills on the ice. The more work you put in the better you will perform."

"I was born with a hole in my right atrium. Having that surgery made it less risk averse to undergoing LVC, but I was still nervous knowing the [team at Focus] was dealing with my eyes. It helped that my good friend recommended it, so when I looked into getting it done and heard from

many people how amazing the procedure is I knew it would be the best decision for my career and vision."

"I thought about getting it done a while back, and heard from friends how it was the best thing they have ever done and then decided it was right for me. I wore contacts while I played and they got really dry when I would be skating and sometime the contacts would move or fall out."

"LVC (a PRK procedure performed in July) will help me see clearly and have no problems."

When asked how NHLers like Mark Fraser having experienced LVC influenced his decision-making, Eric explains, "It certainly made my decision a lot easier knowing how it made these hockey players better on the ice. So yes, it made me realize it's going to help me, as well."

"I was pretty calm and excited to be able to see clearly without glasses or contacts, but I can't lie I was had a bit of fear walking into the procedure room. The second I got up from the procedure bed I looked around and could see everything so clear, I was so happy and excited about what a wonderful job was done."

"My recovery (after PRK) was pretty fast: during the first 48 hours my eyes were sore and itchy, but after that they get better every day... and I know the outcome will be spectacular."

"I need to keep working-out hard and stay strong. I need to have a great camp and show them the best (at the training camp). And if I crack the roster I'll be working just as hard to do my best and help the Winnipeg Jets succeed. For now, Eric says, "I can't wait to see what the final result is and show everyone how LVC has changed my life."

As for life after hockey, the 21-year-old with the scoring touch (he averaged a point a game over five seasons in the OHL and AHL), keeps it real. "I like helping kids out. Having a hockey camp to help young players improve is something that I would enjoy doing when I'm finished hockey."

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Four Weddings & Unreal Vision

Dr. Alexandra Buttle plays hockey, volleyball and softball, and next summer plans to resume her amateur career as a triathlete. But first, the local optometrist is taking part in four weddings this Fall — including her own. *InFocus* asked the good doctor about talking to patients about Laser Vision Correction and her own Intralase SBK procedure, in which her vision went from 'worse than 20/400 to 20/20'.



Dr. Alexandra Buttle

Q: What has been your exposure to Laser Vision Correction (LVC) and Intralase SBK?

A: Obviously, being an optometrist, we are taught all the specifics about LVC procedures, including SBK. The procedures themselves, how they are done, the statistics and the patient demographics they are designed for are all topics that were covered in Laser courses. The office I am part of has had a longstanding and positive history with Focus Eye Centre and I do follow-ups from patients done years ago or just last week. So my decision to have my procedure done with Focus was a well-informed one.

Q: How do patients get information about LVC, and would you say it is accurate and valuable?

A: Patients who ask me about LVC have generally done some homework on it. As with anything online, some sources are more accurate than others and it is important that you seek a reliable source when making this decision. Your eye care specialist or a laser centre can answer most questions for you or direct you to quality reading material for more background and independent research.

Q: What was your personal level of comfort with LVC prior to undergoing your own procedure?

A: My mother had LVC at Focus long before I was an optometrist so it wasn't a foreign concept to me. Her first-hand account of her surgery allowed me to gain some perspective.

Having now gone through it myself makes it easier for me to communicate all the details to my patients. It's always easier when you can give personal anecdotes and empathize with any apprehensions they may have. Answers to questions like, "Does it hurt?" sound a lot more authentic when you have gone through the procedure yourself. And the answer to that question for me is definitely, "Not one bit".

Q: What type of procedure did you have at Focus, and when and with whom was it performed?

A: I had bilateral SBK on June 17, 2011 with Dr. Edmison in Ottawa.

Q: Can you describe your results, in terms of actual visual acuity and the effect it has had on day-to-day living?

A: I went from being worse than 20/400 to 20/20. I had the procedure done on a Friday afternoon and was 20/20 and in no discomfort by the time I went to work on Monday morning.

It has been liberating to say the least. My daily routine often involves a run first thing when I wake up. Personally, if I put my contacts in then they would be uncomfortable by mid-afternoon but I hated running in my glasses. Hockey, volleyball, softball, and triathlons are all activities I thoroughly enjoy. And I am now free to enjoy them with worrying about my contact lenses. I know when I go to compete in the next triathlon next summer (my first one since being contacts-free) I will not be worried about losing my contacts in the swim and having to bike and run uncorrected.

Q: You are getting married in September. Congratulations! Was undergoing LVC all part of the run-up to 'the big day'?

A: Several of my good friends are getting married this fall, as am I. Although not the reason for getting SBK, I can tell you I won't be feeling my dried out contact lenses during the receptions because I teared up during the ceremonies!

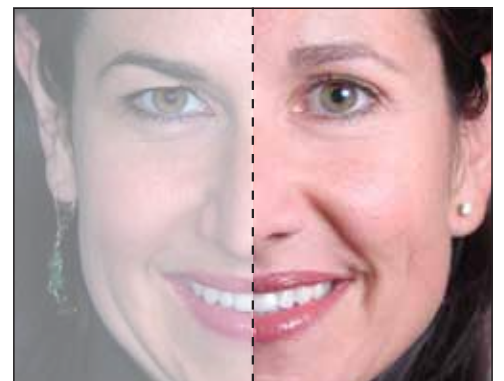
Q: Having undergone a Wavefront-guided Intralase SBK procedure, would you say your professional perspective on LVC has changed?

A: I wouldn't say my perspective on LVC has changed since having SBK. For good candidates

(and this is key... GOOD candidates), I have always been open to LVC, provided people go to a reputable source and are informed about the benefits and potential risks that LVC entails.

Q: Any other comments?

A: I have zero regrets about my choice and every day that I wake up and see the alarm clock without having to put on my glasses first I appreciate the vision that Focus has given me.



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Congratulations!

The Department of Ophthalmology at Queens University presented Focus Eye Centre's Dr. John Cheung with The Garth Taylor Excellence in Teaching Award (2010–2011).

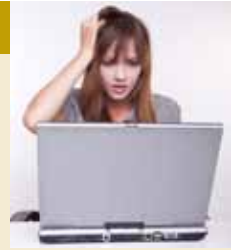
This prestigious award is named after Dr. Garth Alfred Taylor, OJ (1944–2005), a Jamaican-born ophthalmologist, professor, and humanitarian who was briefly affiliated with Focus.

Dr. Taylor was a faculty member at Queen's University for over 25 years, Chief of Ophthalmology at the Cornwall Community Hospital, and the vice-president of ORBIS Canada, a charity devoted to preventing and correcting avoidable cases of blindness in the developing world. He was also the co-founder of Canadian Surgical Eye Expeditions (CANSEE).

Working out of a McDonnell Douglas DC-10 airplane converted into a mobile field hospital, Dr. Taylor performed more than 1,000 charitable eye operations in more than 60 different countries, during more than 100 separate surgical missions. He also provided on-site training for local doctors in cornea, cataract and refractive procedures. For his efforts, Dr. Taylor was honoured with the Order of Jamaica in 2005.

Information Overload?

An online search for reliable information on LVC can be a frustrating experience



Focus Eye Centre recently launched a new version of its website (news we so proudly blared from Page 1 of the Summer issue of *InFocus*). The process of pulling together the new content was an arduous process — and it's still not complete; as with anything online, it's a 'work-in-progress', as they say.

The 'Net is full of medical information that threatens to make armchair experts of us

It's obvious by now, as we head into the twilight of 2011, to say that the Internet is a wonderful place, full of valuable facts and arguments and information. But also a place rife with misinformation, poorly reported stories, boring blogs and, frankly, junk.

So when a person decides to investigate Laser Vision Correction (or, the misnomer "laser eye surgery", which could include any number of procedures beyond refractive ones) the rules of the Information Autobahn still apply: There's some good information out there, but you must be willing to sift through strange rants and too-good-to-be-true raves to find the valuable stuff.

A recent search for professional athletes who have undergone LVC punched up an interesting list from the "SI (Sports Illustrated) Vault": Tiger Woods, Greg Maddux, Troy Aikman, Wade Boggs, Tom Kite, Kenny Rogers, Jeff Bagwell, Patrick Ewing, and Laura Davies. It's an impressive list, made even more impressive by the fact that it was published on July 31, 2000.

A more updated list (courtesy of Florida LVC clinic) includes basketballer LeBron James, golfer Vijay Singh and WNBA player Sue Wicks. The list, of course, goes on.

For better and for worse a general search for "Laser Vision Correction" + "Safety", as a Google search, kicks up a mix of seemingly independent sites (e.g., Wikipedia, government) and corporate sites. The former can be exceedingly useful, although even Health Canada's online information regarding "Laser Eye Surgery for Vision Correction" could use some light editing, as it seems not to have been updated since 2007 and does not include any mention of recent advances in refractive surgery such as Intralase SBK or Wavefront.

As for the latter, we all know that anyone looking to sell a service or commodity heads online with an agenda. Add to this the fact that the 'Net is dominated by American content, so LVC info courtesy of the 'Net skews strongly toward Lasik but includes comparatively little on Intralase SBK and PRK.

Where does that leave the prospective LVC patient? Smack dab in a sea of news and views that must be waded through with equal parts diligence and patience. But take heart: if the going (online) gets too tough for you, there's always that old but very reliable method of information gathering known as speaking to an expert.

The 'Net is full of medical information that threatens to make armchair experts of us all. But for true expertise people should consult a doctor.



Do you have an LVC story to share?

Send your letter, name and daytime contact info to:

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Ottawa, ON K1Z 8R1
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