

EPILASIK: latest vision correction technique

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The Tribune, (Health and Fitness) New Delhi, Wednesday, July 20, 2005

Epilasik is the world's latest refractive vision correction for glass free vision. It has come up with hope to those who show up in clinics requesting for Lasik treatment and turned away — mostly due to thin corneas, dry eyes or very high myopia. While such patients could turn back to their trusted glasses and contact lenses, there is now a new correction system for them that is EPILASIK.

This new generation vision correction surgery uses a blunt blade to cleave or push away a thinner corneal flap to leave behind more residual corneal thickness that gives more strength and stability of the cornea.

How it differs from Lasik: Epilasik is a relatively new concept in the field of refractive error correction with promise of potential advantages over Lasik. It is a better treatment for eyes having high power, thin corneas and dry eye problems.

In general the average corneal thickness is 530-550 microns. Corneas below 490 microns can not be operated upon in Lasik, because Lasik involves cutting a flap that is 140-160 micron thick and as a corneal residual thickness of at least 250 micron has to be left behind. High powers couldn't be corrected using lasik because removing each power requires removing an extra 10-12 micron of the stromal tissue.

This new procedure allows surgeons to make flap that is 60 microns thick, leaving more residual cornea untouched so it corrects eyes with a higher power, treat thin corneas and leaves behind increased corneal stability.

Epilasik Corrects:

- Myopia upto – 14.0 Diopters
- Hyperopia upto +6.0 Diopters
- Cylindrical Power upto +/- 6.0 Diopters

How it works:

- During Epilasik the eye is numbed using anesthetic eye drops and eyelid holder placed to prevent blinking.
- A dissecting instrument called a epikeratome is used to slice off a thin layer of the cornea – about 10 percent of corneal thickness.
- Computer controlled laser is then applied to reshape the cornea with high energy pulse of ultraviolet light
- Finally the epithelial flap is rolled back to its original position.
- Bandage contact lens is applied for 3-5 days.

What to expect: Recovery in epilasik is little longer. The thinner flap needs a bandage contact lens support for 3-5 days as it heals.

There will be watering, irritation and some foreign body sensation in the eye for few days as healing occurs. The patient would be required to use eye drops for 4-6 weeks after the procedure. Stabilization of vision also takes 4-6 weeks.

Other Facts:

- It is walk in- walk out surgery, no night stay is required
- Both eyes operated upon together
- Each eye takes 10-15 minutes
- Preparatory tests/screening take approximate 2 hours
- Patient can return to work in 3-5 days.

Eligibility for Epilasik:

- Those who have completed 18 years of age and have stable power for 6 months
 - Patients who are not eligible for lasik may be fit to undergo Epilasik
 - Patients who are at risk to undergo lasik may safely undergo Epilasik
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