

Better vision without glasses

Implantable contact lenses are an alternative for those with severe myopia and may have lower risks

AUDREY NG

LASIK eye surgery, a popular method in Singapore to treat myopia, is not suitable for everyone.

Myopia, more commonly known as shortsightedness, is a condition where an affected person sees objects that are near clearly but distant objects appear blurred.

Severe myopia, a thin or abnormal cornea or dry eyes eliminate the option of Lasik.

Those who cannot go for Lasik can opt

for implantable contact lenses, more commonly known as ICL.

In this procedure, a lens is inserted behind the iris to correct myopia, hyperopia and astigmatism.

The lens is made of a material known as collamer, similar to collagen, and is biocompatible with the body.

The procedure takes just 10 minutes under either general or regional anaesthesia, says Assistant Professor Mohamad Rosman, head and senior consultant in the Refractive Surgery Department and Laser Vision Centre, Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC).

ICL is able to treat very high degrees of myopia of up to 2,300 and astigmatism of 600, he says.

Compared to Lasik, he says they try to not treat beyond 1,000 degrees as the predictability of someone with high myopia getting 6/6 vision is lower compared to a person with a lower degree of myopia.

ICL does not involve thinning the cor-



Prof Rosman shows with an eye model where exactly in the eye the lens implants will be positioned. PHOTO: SINGAPORE NATIONAL EYE CENTRE

nea and poses low risk of weakening it, unlike Lasik, which thins the cornea, he says.

The procedure is also reversible, meaning that the lens can be removed in future.

Dr Cheryl Lee-Aeschlimann, cataract, retinal and implantable contact lens specialist at Pacific Eye Centre, says: "When we grow older, we will have reading vision problems. The advantage of

the reversibility of the ICL is that it can be replaced with a multifocal lens. This is not an option for patients who have had Lasik due to issues of the cornea post-surgery."

Post-Lasik patients can still do ICL if their eyesight regresses, she adds.

Prof Rosman says: "We use ICL in cases where people can't do laser refractive surgery on the cornea."