

January 11, 2011

Hello,

I was diagnosed with having glaucoma during my very first eye-examination, around six years ago. I had noticed that I was not seeing very clearly with my right eye and decided to have my eyes examined. My optometrist Dr. April Wootten had confirmed that I had astigmatism in my right eye. A simple eye glass prescription would do. She had then proceeded to check my optic nerves and it was then when she had seen that my optic nerves in my right eye were pale (healthy optic nerves should be light pink)...She had then followed by checking my eye-pressure and confirmed to me what she feared. While the left eye pressure was normal, my right eye pressure was at 30. She had told me that I had glaucoma in my right eye. She immediately set up an appointment with Dr. Shawn Cohen. When I was examined by Dr. Cohen, the pressure in my right eye was at 52! He immediately put me on Cosopt drops (twice a day) and asked to see me the following week. When I arrived at his office the following week, my pressure was down to 30 (still high), so he added Xalatan drops (once a day). With these drops my pressure stabilized at 16 - 18 in my left eye and 18-20 in my right eye. I want to add that my left eye is in perfect health, thank God and I use the drops in my left eye as a preventative measure.

Things were smooth for six years; however, I did start noticing a difference in my right eye a couple of months ago. Things seemed darker and if I covered my left eye, I had to look at myself in the mirror very, very closely in order to distinguish my features. This was very scary. I decided to have my eyes checked to see if I needed a stronger prescription in my right eye. I want to mention that I usually do not use my glasses 80% of the time. I have amazing eye-vision with my left eye, thank God and because of this, my left eye compensates for my right eye. When Dr. Wootten checked my eyes, she noted that my left eye had remained the same 20/20 eye-vision with my prescription at .25 (very, very minimum), however my right eye had gone from 20/20 and three years later to 20/25 and then 20/40! I was losing my eye-sight and fast. I went to see Dr. Cohen and he confirmed what I feared; my pressure was high at 52 in my right eye. He immediately put Cosopt in my eye. He could not let me leave the office with a pressure of 52. I saw him the following day and the pressure was down at 30 (still high). I needed an operation and fast if I wanted to regain and keep my eye-sight. He also discovered that I had cataracts, as well. Good grief! I always thought cataracts were associated with people over 65 years-old. Apparently not. N.B. It's so important to wear your sunglasses, especially with the depletion of the ozone layer, the sun's rays can prove to be damaging to the eyes. At any rate, I had agreed to the operation, which was set for in a week. I later had the misfortune of researching the internet (please discuss your fears with your doctor and realize that the unfortunate stories that you read on the internet are not totally accurate and the rest are of the 1% population who unfortunately did not fare well after the operation). Dr. Cohen had asked me what I feared the most and my reply was, "I fear that I will lose my eye-sight with this operation", to which he responded, " You have less than 1% chance of losing your eye-sight with operation, however, if you don't have this operation, you stand 100% chance of losing your eye-sight." My mind was made up. I went in for my eye-surgery the following day. Dr. Cohen prescribed a mild relaxant in order for me to better sleep (I'm a worrier, so this helped). Dr. Cohen performed a biometry in order to determine how big the cataracts were and what lens would be used for the cataract operation (it's very quick and not painful.)

The following day I arrived at the hospital very early in the morning and purchased my foldable lens, which they insert after the cataract operation (it's permanent and you cannot tell it's there!), before presenting myself at reception of the operation floor. After registering, I waited around 15 minutes, when they called my name. I was directed to a room where a nurse applied anesthetic drops to my right eye. I was then escorted to a changing room, where I endorsed a lovely hospital gown lol (You change in order to prevent any germs from infiltrating the operation room). I walked to the operating waiting room, where I waited on a bed. I asked for the "magic relaxing pill" and felt quite comfortable waiting my turn. All of the hospital staff was very, very nice. When my turn arrived, I was wheeled in the operating room, where I was met by Dr. Cohen and his staff (truly nice people). The operation lasted around 35 minutes and Dr. Cohen explained step by step all of the procedures (I really appreciated this, as I like to be aware of what's going on). The operation being over, I was wheeled back to the waiting room, where I waited around 15 minutes before being discharged with a patch (you can see with through this patch). My eye did feel sore one hour after the operation, but it's normal. I removed my patch the following day, and put in an antibiotic drop, followed by Predforte, which is an anti-inflammatory drop. N.B. You should wait at least 15 minutes before applying the second drop; otherwise, the second drop will wash out the effects of the first drops. I had to put my anti-biotic drops for two weeks, four times a day, whereas I had to put my anti-inflammatory drops every two hours, for the first two weeks and then six times a day, for the next two weeks. I am now down to four times a day and as of January 1st, only twice a day (Predforte can not be stopped suddenly. It has to be gradually tapered off). ***N.B. Little update: As of yesterday, January 10th, I am now down to once a day and my pressure is now 16 in both eyes!***

My stitches were removed two weeks after the operation by laser. It was fast and easy. Dr. Cohen also cleansed my foldable lens, which was a little foggy (again very fast and not painful at all). Wow, what an incredible difference!

My eye-sight keeps improving daily and I am continuously amazed and thankful for the improvement. I can now see better and better with each passing day and my astigmatism has improved. I did go through a certain amount of anxiety during the first two weeks after the operation, but this is quite normal. It's also normal not to see clearly right after the operation. Give yourself at least three weeks. Things do improve and how!!! I now have to set up an appointment with my optometrist again. I'm very excited to see how much my eye-sight has improved since the operation!

I can never thank Dr. Cohen enough for what for what he has done for me! I used to live in fear regarding my right eye and would dread my yearly visits. Not anymore!!!