

# Help for the nearsighted

Orthokeratology, or Ortho-K, is the non-surgical procedure that will reduce or eliminate myopia (nearsightedness) and astigmatism. This specialized procedure involves the programmed use of a series of highly gas permeable contact lenses. These high-tech lenses cause a change in the contour of the cornea. When the cornea deviates from a normal contour, as is the case in most myopia and astigmatism, this non-surgical procedure can be of great value in restoring natural vision.

Dr. Eger also combines in combining the benefits of Ortho-K with what he terms "Sports Vision Enhancement Therapy." This type of therapy involves the use of an Accommotrac Vision Trainer which gauges a patient's focusing ability. This instrument beams an infra-red light into the eye and records the ciliary muscle's focusing status 40 times per second. Those measurements are converted into sound signals. The patient is then able to listen to the audible signals and concentrate on relaxing his ciliary muscles when the signals are further apart. Dr. Eger calls this "a conscious method of controlling an unconscious reaction." The results of the combination of Ortho-K and Sports Vision Enhancement Therapy are astounding. Kevin Barklay, an avid golfer and pilot, called upon Dr. Eger to see if he could do anything about his nearsightedness. After completing the procedure, Barklay's vision had improved to 20/30 in his left eye and 20/40 in his right eye, near perfect vision.

We asked Dr. Jeffrey Eger, "What is myopia and astigmatism?" Myopia is more commonly known as nearsightedness. Approximately 70% of those people who become nearsighted, start between the ages of 7 and 12. Myopia is a progressive condition, once it starts, it progresses to varying levels of severity. The cause is visual stress brought on the eye by concentrated close work, such as studying and reading."

Astigmatism is a warped surface of the eye and usually it's the cornea that's warped. This causes blurred vision, headaches and other symptoms. The warped cornea can quickly and safely be

made more spherical using the Ortho-K procedure thus reducing or eliminating astigmatism.

How do you know if Ortho-K is for you? Before a patient starts Ortho-K a careful and detailed predictability study is

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performed. This predictability study indicates the amount of corneal deviation from normal that the patient has. A picture of the cornea is made using a special technique, utilizing a Cornea Scope. This state of the art instrument measures the cornea much like an engineer's aerial topograph. This precision instrument tells the doctor how much corneal myopia and astigmatism is present. Once the predictability has been performed, the doctor can predict quite accurately how much he can help you. "The predictability study is extremely accurate, about 90% of all patients achieve the results the predictability study indicates." Says Dr. Eger.

*Simple and painless, this procedure involves no surgery.* Once the corneal contour and its deviation from normal is known, the doctor simply alters the cornea's shape using special gas permeable contact lenses to aid him.

Four institutional research studies have been completed on Ortho-K at the university level, throughout the United States. All studies concluded it to be *effective, safe and without harmful side effects.*

There are no age restrictions to Ortho-K. Dr. Eger recounts, "One patient, an 11 year-old girl, arrived with 20/200 vi-

sion and worsening myopia, her prescription had doubled in the 12 months prior to visiting our office. By the time she had completed Ortho-K she was corrected to 20/20..."

*Who can benefit from Ortho-K?* Anyone who is nearsighted or astigmatic and shows change potential on the predictability study. Improved or corrected unaided vision can mean a career opportunity for some and improved sports ability for others. "Another patient, a pilot whose sight had regressed in service from 20/20 to 20/40, came to us because he'd been turned down for a job by a major airline. In two months, his eyes improved to 20/15 and he got the job." "Ortho-K can mean freedom from glasses or contact lenses."

Dr. Eger has been interviewed by several newspapers, radio and television stations on the subject of orthokeratology, he is considered the leading expert in this area. Dr. Eger is a member of the National Eye Research Foundation's Orthokeratology Section.

*If you would like additional information about Ortho-K or Sports Vision Enhancement Therapy, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Eger at 800-621-2258, or you may contact the National Eye Research Foundation at 1-800-621-2258. 480-961-1177*

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