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A PRACTICE BUILDING RESOURCE
Bausch & Lomb
Perfecting Vision. Enhancing Life.™

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The Five Myths of Masking Astigmatism: Myth #1

Historically, many practitioners prescribed single vision spherical soft contact lenses for the correction of their patients with low amounts of astigmatism ("masking"). This may have made sense years ago, when the available soft toric lenses delivered inconsistent results, but there's no reason today to have such concerns. Today the practice of masking is becoming less common, primarily due to advances in toric soft lens technology.

Over the next several weeks we will explore why more and more eye care professionals are recommending soft toric contact lenses for even their low astigmatic patients. Specifically, we will address the five common myths that in the past drove, and may still at times drive, the use of spherical lenses to mask astigmatism, and show how today's toric lens technologies offer a much better solution.

Myth #1 – Visual acuity with low cylinder toric lenses is not significantly better than with single vision spherical lens correction

Myth #2 – The risk of variable vision with toric lenses is too much of a trade off relative to the assurance of stable spherical vision

Myth #3 – Toric lenses aren't as comfortable as spherical lenses

Myth #4 – Significantly more chair time is required to fit toric lenses

Myth #5 – The higher cost to patients of toric lenses is a barrier relative to spherical lenses

As we begin this series of articles on the Five Myths of Masking Astigmatism, it should first be stated that the astigmatic patients' specific visual needs cannot always be corrected by spherical lenses. Astigmatic correction comes only through the application of a toric lens design (correcting both sphere and cylinder). However, spherical lenses are often perceived as easier to fit, less expensive, and still capable of delivering an "acceptable" level of visual performance for the astigmatic patient by masking the cylinder correction.

In reality, these misperceptions about spherical lenses undermine a patient's opportunity for the best fit and superior visual performance. New technology and design innovation in toric lenses make exceptional visual acuity and visual quality achievable for all levels of astigmatic patients. And when it comes to correcting astigmatism, spherical lenses simply don't compare.

For instance, with a unique anterior aspheric surface designed to correct spherical aberrations and a posterior toric surface that corrects astigmatism, the Bausch & Lomb PureVision® Toric lens produces excellent overall visual acuity levels. In a clinical evaluation conducted at 117 sites in 8 different countries, 152 spherical contact lens wearers were refit in the PureVision Toric lens. Of these patients 89% achieved 20/20 or better vision as compared to only 35% with their previous spherical correction.[1]

As eye care practitioners, it's our opportunity and, ultimately, our responsibility to present patients with the best product option for them. In this series of articles, you will find that contrary to popular belief, fitting astigmatic patients in the appropriate toric lenses is not more difficult or more time consuming, less comfortable for the patient or out of their price range. Instead, it provides patients with vision that is not just "good enough" but excellent. The enhancement to their visual experience is an excellent patient satisfaction and practice-building tool that can result in happy contact lens wearing patients.

Watch a 4-minute video at this link to hear how Dr. Joseph Udvari uses the latest technologies to enhance his practice and surpass the expectations of his patients. www.bausch.com/udvari

Please look for future editions of EyeMatters where we will discuss and dispel myths #2 through #5. And if you miss any editions of the EyeMatters series, you can go to the archives at http://www.eyematters.com/archive.asp.

Sincerely,
Mike Pier, OD
Director, Professional Relations – Practitioner Education

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