

## Crystal Clear

Never take your vision for granted

by Dr Lee Sao Bing  
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**EZYHEALTH MET DR Lee**, Medical Director and Principal Surgeon of Shinagawa Lasik & Eye Centre, Singapore, and he stressed the importance of having our eyes checked annually. Dr Lee has many years of experience in using Lasik to treat myopia, hyperopia, astigmatism and presbyopia. Prior to this, he was the Head of the Cornea Service at the National University Hospital Eye Centre, where he performed cataract surgeries, cornea transplants, Lasik and PRK (Photorefractive keratectomy) surgeries. He was instrumental in setting up Shinagawa Lasik & Eye Centre in 2008 – designing the layout of the centre, acquiring equipment and training the staff. Dr Lee is one of a few doctors in Singapore who holds a Bachelors, Masters and also a Doctorate degree in Medicine. His degrees in Medicine and Surgery are from Singapore

while his postgraduate degrees in Ophthalmology are from Singapore and United Kingdom. He also completed two fellowships, one in United States at the prestigious Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and one in Toronto, Canada.

He is fellowship-trained in the field of Cornea and Refractive (Lasik) Surgery, which means that he has special interest in treating dry eyes, contact lens problems, allergic eye disease and all aspects of Lasik surgery. He has been invited to many international conferences to speak on Wavefront Lasik and Intralase and has published many research papers in international peer-reviewed journals. He is also the winner of four research awards in various research meetings and was awarded several research grants from the National Medical Research Council.

**EH: Tell us why are you passionate about specialising in ophthalmology?**

**Dr Lee:** Ophthalmology is a very visual field. An eye doctor can literally look at the patients' eyes and come up with a diagnosis. Most eye diseases have good treatments available. This means that the patient will recover well and fast. It is very rewarding to make people see well again and I'm happy when my patients are happy.

**EH: How does your usual day at the centre begin?**

**Dr Lee:** I usually start my day by seeing a few patients in the clinic and then go into the operating theatre to perform surgeries.

**EH: Share with us the USP of Shinagawa Lasik & Eye Centre**

**Dr Lee:** The most important component at our centre is the human touch. We treat each patient as an individual. We believe that no two eyes and no two humans are the same. We therefore individualise our treatment plans according to the patient's history and the eye data acquired from the patients' eyes. This customisation is possible by not stinging in our investment of new and modern technologies.

**EH: What has been your biggest challenge in your career?**

**Dr Lee:** I can't think of any particular event or milestone that has been the biggest challenge. It has been a series of challenges to get to where I am today. And I would say that I am still facing challenges. A constant challenge is to give every single patient the best vision

possible. I work hard at every surgery to optimise the outcome.

**EH: Share with us things that we take our eyes for granted?**

**Dr Lee:** Many people in Singapore overuse their eyes. For example, many people spend too many hours in front of the PC or some hand-held device. Also some individuals do not follow the advice of their eye-care practitioner, such as wearing contact lenses for long periods or sleeping with lenses on.

**EH: Tell us the latest innovation/trend in eye surgery/research.**

**Dr Lee:** An exciting advancement in the field of Lasik is the use of cross-linking to strengthen the cornea. This has increasingly gained popularity in Europe, Japan, Canada and South America.

**EH: Can you shed some light on cross-linking treatment?**

**Dr Lee:** Cross-linking refers to a surgery that is used to strengthen the cornea. This was invented back in 1998 to help strengthen a cornea that is inherently weak (a disease known as Keratoconus). The first machine used took one hour of treatment time. But with advancements in technology, the treatment now takes a matter of minutes. This short treatment time allows it to be executed at the time of Lasik procedure (known as Lasik Xtra) in order to strengthen the cornea. We can now prevent a cornea from getting too weak from Lasik. This treatment is suitable for those with thin corneas and high spectacle correction.

**EH: Give us some tips on maintaining healthy eyes**

**Dr Lee:** Always rest your eyes after every 30 minutes of computer use, reduce the use of hand-held devices and get enough sleep each night, do not use tap water to rinse the eye instead use lubricant eye drops, and follow the advice of your eye-care practitioner with regards to contact lens usage.

**EH: Are there any misconceptions to Lasik procedure?**

**Dr Lee:** Yes, there are. Firstly, Lasik cannot treat astigmatism. Also, Lasik cannot treat presbyopia – we can treat this by doing monovision, i.e. one eye to see far and the other eye to see near. People think Lasik is a painful procedure when in fact, there is no pain experienced, however, some will experience some tearing and discomfort over the next few hours as the anaesthesia wears off. Another misconception to note is that Lasik cannot be done above a certain age. Lasik can be performed in an eye that has already undergone a cataract procedure of an 80-year-old individual.

**EH: What would be the greatest harm we can do to our eyes without realising it?**

**Dr Lee:** The most common error is to overuse contact lenses until an eye infection develops. This can potentially lead to blindness.

**EH: What can you say about Singapore being the myopia capital of the world?**

**Dr Lee:** This is a combination of genetics and environment. We cannot change genetics (at least not yet for

myopia) but we can definitely change environment. So please take good care of your eyes by practising good eye care habits.

**EH: What are your leisure pursuits?**

**Dr Lee:** I enjoy outdoor activities such as tennis, jogging and swimming. I also have a penchant for good movies. eh

