

RE: JUVENATE

Never Too Late for LASIK

Don't let midlife stand in the way to having your eyesight corrected. Let Dr Lee Sao Bing tell you about LASIK for silvers!

BY KIM HANA

When you have to tip your glasses or place reading material at arms' length, chances are you are suffering from long-sightedness or presbyopia.

Presbyopia, an offshoot of the ageing process, coupled with myopia (short-sightedness) from your younger days, can make for troublesome years ahead. Not only will you have to invest on a pair of bifocals, you also run the risk of spending half the time looking for them! Yes, muddle-headedness hap-

pens to the best of us. Plus, not all of us look great in glasses.

The good news is that you don't have to live with presbyopia. Dr Lee Sao Bing, Medical Director at Shinagawa LASIK Centre, enlightens.

When is one too old for LASIK?

There is no maximum age limit for LASIK. Every case is different. The doctor will review the patient's risk and benefits after a comprehensive assessment and advise accordingly.

Q: So then presbyopia can be corrected with LASIK?

Presbyopia can be treated by "under-correcting" one eye, that is, allow one eye to be slightly shortsighted for it to see near. The other eye can be fully corrected to allow the eye to see far. This is called "monovision".

What is the downtime for LASIK?

Most will take two to three days' off work even though most activities can resume immediately after surgery. Most patients find that their eyes feel fairly normal within a day. However, for a week post-LASIK, do refrain from rubbing your eyes and prevent contact with foreign materials (such as soap water). Also avoid activities such as contact sports and swimming for several weeks. It is possible for vision to fluctuate for a few weeks as the

eyes heal. Usually, it will take around a week for full recovery and your new improved vision to be fully established.

Describe the recovery process.

For a few hours after the procedure, patients will feel a sensation not unlike that of having had chlorine water enter the eye; some may experience tearing. Thereafter, the eyes will begin to return to a normal comfortable state.

Light sensitivity, also known as glare and haloes, are seen at night. An example would be driving on a dimly lit road and having headlights of oncoming cars appear like starbursts. This might be true for anywhere from two to five months, depending on the refractive error (higher power has more glare and haloes) and the pupil size in dim light (larger pupil experiences more glare and haloes).

Explain the side effects of LASIK, if any.

By and large, LASIK is a safe and effective procedure. With the advancement of LASIK technology and medical processes, the documented risk of complications arising from LASIK surgery is less than 1 percent. Even so, these are generally temporary and treatable and include dry eyes and night visual disturbances (glare and halos). Infections are rare, and if they do occur, there are good antibiotics to treat the condition. **SL**

Dr Lee Sao Bing has been the Medical Director at Shinagawa LASIK Centre since 2008. Prior to this, Dr Lee served at the National University Hospital as Head of Cornea Service and LASIK Specialist in the Department of Ophthalmology for four years. His work involved performing eye surgeries, teaching medical students and young doctors, and carrying out eye research. He was concurrently appointed Clinical Teacher with the National University of Singapore (NUS). A medical school graduate from NUS, Dr. Lee was awarded the National Medical Research Council Fellowship to pursue eye research at the prestigious Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in USA in 1997.

