Are You a Candidate for Corneal Transplantation?

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Close to 50,000 cornea transplants are now performed in the United States each year, and out of all transplant surgeries (such as heart, lung and kidney), corneal transplants are the most common as well as the most successful, with rejection rates ranging from 5-30% of the time. Over 95 percent of all corneal transplant operations successfully restore the corneal recipient’s vision.

A corneal transplant is used when vision is lost because the cornea has been damaged by disease or traumatic injury, and there are no other viable options.

At Florida Eye a corneal transplant may be recommended for several reasons, such as if a patient has experienced any of the following...

1. Corneal failure after other eye surgery, such as cataract surgery
2. Keratoconus, a steep curving of the cornea
3. Hereditary corneal failure, such as Fuchs' dystrophy
4. Scarring after infections, especially after herpes
5. Rejection after a first corneal transplant
6. Scarring after injury such as chemical burns or trauma
OK, what is a cornea anyway?

The cornea is the clear front window of the eye that covers the colored iris and the round pupil. Light is focused by the cornea and lens so we can see clearly. If the cornea is injured, it may become swollen or scarred, and its smoothness and clarity may be lost. Scars, swelling, or an irregular shape can cause the cornea to scatter or distort light, resulting in glare or blurred vision.

Where does the new cornea come from?

In corneal transplant, also known as keratoplasty, a patient's damaged cornea is replaced by the cornea from the eye of a human cadaver. Eye banks acquire and store eyes from donors to supply the need for transplant corneas. Corneal transplant surgery would not be possible without the thousands of generous donors and their families who have donated corneal tissue so that others may have their vision restored.

When a cornea is rejected...

Corneal transplants are rejected 5% to 30% of the time. The rejected cornea clouds and vision deteriorates. Most rejections, if treated promptly, can be stopped with minimal injury. Any symptoms should be reported to your surgeon immediately. Possible warning signs or symptoms of rejection are:

- persistent discomfort
- sensitivity to light
- redness
- any changes in vision

Other possible complications resulting from corneal transplantation, and which can be treated, include:

- infection
- bleeding
- swelling or detachment of the retina
- glaucoma.
A corneal transplant can be repeated, usually with good results, but the overall rejection rates for repeated transplants are higher than for the first transplant. Irregular curvature of the transplanted cornea (astigmatism) may slow the return of vision but it can also be treated. Vision may continue to improve up to a year after surgery. A successful corneal transplant requires care and attention on the part of both patient and physician.

And that’s reason enough why you should come to Dr. Schechter for your corneal services!

As the Director of Cornea & Cataract Services at Florida Eye, Dr. Schechter is eminently qualified to handle any corneal issues, from abrasions and erosions to transplantation. Certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology, Dr. Schechter is a cornea specialist who completed his corneal transplant fellowship at The University of Texas in Houston and then went on to practice in Broward County for twelve years. He is certified in many laser surgical procedures including SLT, YAG Laser System and LASIK.

Barry A. Schechter, M.D., F.A.A.O., Director, Cornea & Cataract Services, Glaucoma, External Disease Specialist, Comprehensive Ophthalmology

And Florida Eye’s Boynton Beach Ambulatory Patient Center for corneal transplantation!

Florida Eye has a state of the art outpatient surgery center for cornea surgery right on the premises and a dedicated, caring, top notch surgical staff. The Institute also has well established relationships with the multiple eye banks that provide us with corneal tissue for transplantation. Each and every patient is given our full attention, whether it is for an actual transplant, or another issue, such as a corneal abrasion or erosion.

Want to know more?
Read more about what to expect on the day of surgery and more about corneal transplantation and corneal issues in general by visiting www.fleyedocs.com.
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