

Press Release

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New Lens That Closely Mimics the Human Eye Introduced In Michigan by TLC Eyecare and Laser Centers

Farmington Hills, MI -- A more advanced replacement lens that more closely mimics the human lens will be introduced this month by Paul H. Ernest, MD, and other physicians at TLC Eye Care & Laser Centers.

The AcrySof Natural Lens, which has the capability of slowing the progression of macular degeneration, filters out blue light that can damage the pigment cells of the retina. While the human eye filters out up to 80 percent of blue light waves, traditional replacement lens can only filter out ultra-violet rays.

When a cataract is removed and an artificial lens is inserted, the replacement lens absorbs blue light, which can damage the eye, says Dr. Ernest, founder of TLC Eye Care & Laser Centers and an associate clinical professor of ophthalmology at Kresge Eye Institute, Wayne State University.

Dr. Ernest, one of the principal clinical investigators of the Natural Lens, has participated in lectures and workshops on the topic in Florence, Italy-Nice, France, San Francisco, Philadelphia, and elsewhere.

Because of this professional involvement, Dr. Ernest has been selected to by the manufacturer (Alcon Laboratories of Fort Worth, Tex.) to introduce the Natural Lens in Michigan.

Bill Graham, senior director for clinical sciences for Alcon Laboratories, said the AcrySof Natural Lens was introduced in Europe six months ago and has sold very successfully there. "The lens mimics the transmission curve of the healthy human lens of a patient aged 50-53," said Graham. "The lens is being introduced in Michigan because of Dr. Ernest's role as a principal investigator for Alcon."

"TLC Eyecare & Laser Centers will be one of the first in the U.S. to receive the AcrySof Natural Lens," says Dr. Ernest. "With this product in hand we are now in a position to offer rather remarkable improvements for our lens implant patients. Rather than waiting until the blue light waves are absorbed we can filter out these harmful waves before they reach the retina.

"The Natural Lens has a yellow chromophore bonded to the plastic that acts as a filter," adds Dr. Ernest. "This filter does not alter color vision, and does not alter the ability to perceive things under a dim light. There's no down side, only the up side of mimicking the human lens."

Dr. Ernest points to research done by Dr. John Marshall and Dr. Janet Sparrow who found that blue light may be a contributing factor to macular degeneration, a debilitating loss of central vision. "There are many factors that cause this disease. So we must realize that the Natural Lens is not a cure-all but its positive effects are very powerful," says Ernest.

"Ophthalmologists have undergone retrofits of blue light filters in operating microscopes to prevent retinal damage," says Marshall. "We now have the ability to protect our patients for the rest of their lives with the AcrySof Natural Lens."

Dr. Carmelina Gordon, a retinal surgeon at TLC Eyecare & Laser Centers explains that persons with the advanced stages of macular degeneration cannot focus, read, tell time, see faces, drive, write checks, or do other close up work. "It is not a reversible disease and actually is progressive," says Dr. Gordon. "Smoking and hypertension can aggravate macular degeneration and we know that diet and genetics also have a relationship to who gets this disease.

"A large scale study found that patients who had cataract surgery in one eye had a greater chance of having macular degeneration in that eye than in the eye that still has the cataract," says Dr. Gordon. "The yellowing of the cataract offers a protection against ultra-violet and blue light waves damaging the macula. The AcrySof Natural Lens filters most of the blue light."

TLC Eyecare & Laser Centers have offices in Lansing, Jackson, Battle Creek, Chelsea, Ann Arbor, Farmington Hills and Kalamazoo Michigan. For information or an appointment, call the center at 1-800-551-7347 or visit the company's web site at www.tlcmi.com.

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