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Boater Says Aye to Cataract Surgery

Patients do well to look for ophthalmologists who customize treatment for each individual's needs.

Over the last few years, Charles Sullivan began noticing that his eyesight was waning.

"I was having difficulty seeing in the rain," remembers the Vero Beach attorney. "I couldn't see as well in the dark, and picking out things in the distance was problematic. Colors weren't as true as I thought they should be, either."

Charles says his wife has been a longtime patient of William J. Mallon, MD, a board-certified ophthalmologist and fellowship-trained ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgeon. Dr. Mallon is founder of the Center for Advanced Eye Care.

"Several years ago," recalls Charles, "I went into the Center for Advanced Eye Care for an eye exam. I was very impressed with the office facilities, the modern nature of the equipment, its efficiency, and how technical and complicated it was. I know many physicians in town, having lived here all of my adult life, but I chose Dr. Mallon because I think he is the most professional and experienced in the area."

"At the time, Dr. Mallon indicated to me that at some time in the future I would need cataract surgery."

Dr. Mallon explains that a cataract is clouding of the natural lens in the eye: "The lenses in our eyes grow throughout life, with new layers added each year, much like the rings around a tree. Eventually those layers become cloudy and darken. As light is blocked, blurred images form on the retina."

"During cataract surgery, the natural lens of the eye is removed and replaced with a transparent, synthetic lens which will enable light to pass through unobstructed so that images are no longer hazy."

When Charles went back to see Dr. Mallon, the doctor confirmed that it was time for cataract surgery.

"Dr. Mallon is friendly, and extremely knowledgeable," notes Charles. "He explains everything in detail so that by the time of the surgery, you completely understand it."

Among the more innovative procedures Dr. Mallon performs in his practice is a cataract removal that does not require injections, stitches, or an eye patch afterward.

"In my practice, 'no needle' means no needle anywhere," assures the doctor. "I numb the eye with anesthetic drops, and then during the procedure I use what I call verbal anesthesia, meaning that patients and I communicate quietly with each other until everything has been completed. I stay in touch with how they are feeling, provide reassurance when needed, and let them know what to expect. This interaction keeps patients relaxed throughout the entire cataract removal and lens implantation."

Dr. Mallon's success in putting his patients at ease and talking them through procedures without the need for introducing the risks associated with intravenous (IV) sedation stems from his innate sensitivity to their



feelings.

“It’s normal to be nervous about any surgery,” says Dr. Mallon, “but I have found that with soothing words and a little extra effort on my part, I am able to keep my patients relaxed. And, because I do not use IV sedation, I eliminate the potentially dangerous side effects associated with this type of anesthesia.”

Patient dependent

Along with deciding when their eyesight has deteriorated to the point that they want their cataracts removed, patients also need to choose what type of eyesight they want following surgery.

Dr. Mallon emphasizes that choosing the right lens is not a cookie-cutter process: “It should be highly individualized, and our philosophy has always been to help each patient make the choice that will maximize his or her vision goals.

“Every lens we offer is patient dependent, meaning that no one lens is perfect for every patient. With today’s improved predictability of cataract surgery, we are usually able to reduce patients’ dependence on eyeglasses for either distance vision or near vision, and sometimes for both. Although we have many patients who will never need glasses for any activity, results vary. That is why I really listen to my patients and spend enough time with each one to learn about his or her lifestyle so we can determine what is going to work best for that patient before selecting the right lens implants.”

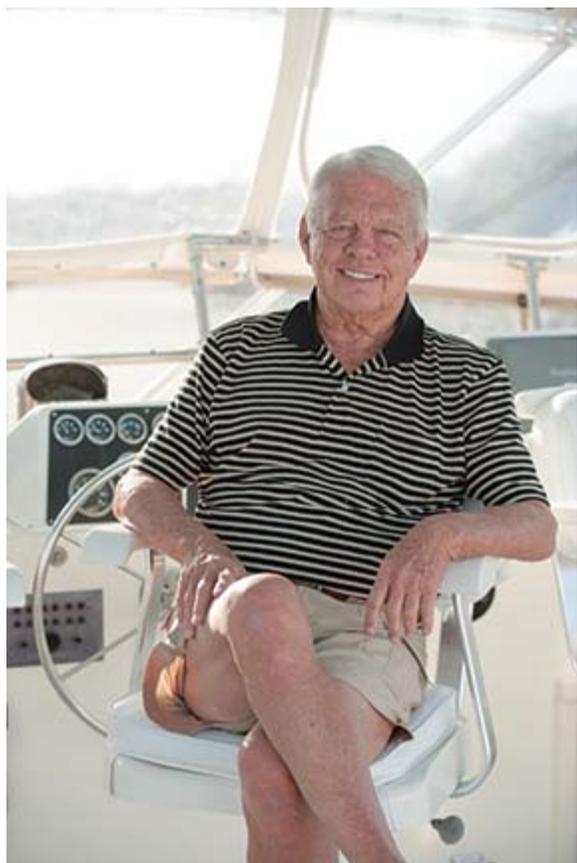
Patients can have both eyes corrected with standard lenses for distance vision, in which case they will likely require glasses for near vision, or they may choose to have their eyes corrected for close-up vision, in which case they will probably require glasses for distance. Some patients may also choose monovision, a technique where the dominant eye is focused for distance vision and the nondominant eye is focused for near-to-intermediate vision. Monovision can help patients be as independent from glasses as possible.

He explains that along with these standard intraocular lenses [IOLs], there are several types of premium lens implants available today: “There is the Crystalens, which is designed to move inside the eye and help patients be more glasses independent.”

Then there are multifocal lenses, which work similarly to a bifocal and provide more than one focal distance. “There are also different versions of what is called an aspheric IOL,” informs the doctor, “which have been shown to provide patients with improved contrast sensitivity.”

Additionally, for patients with astigmatism, which results in blurred vision, there is an IOL called toric. It can correct both vision and astigmatism simultaneously without having to make extra incisions on the eye.

After consulting with Dr. Mallon, Charles chose standard lenses.



Charles says good vision is critical when you are out at sea.

Excellent results

On September 6, 2012, Dr. Mallon performed cataract surgery on Charles' first eye, and two weeks later on his second eye.

"I was dumfounded at both the efficiency of the surgery itself and by the amazing results I obtained," he says. "Before the surgery, I thought I could see fairly well. I had no idea how much I'd been missing until after the surgery.

"The standard lenses I chose were more than satisfactory. I can read without glasses. I can see clearly both for distance and at night.

"I have eyes like a bird, now, which is important because I'm a boater. Sight is very important when you're at sea.

"I was particularly pleased that the results Dr. Mallon described actually did, in fact, take place. Several of my friends had cataract surgeries around the same time I did by other physicians, and they say they did not get the good results I have.

"I would consider mine almost a miracle."



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