



A Clear View



Photos courtesy, Lingua Vision

Dr. Robert Lingua, a Board Certified Ophthalmologist, has been offering the latest in LASIK laser vision surgery technology since the FDA approved it in 1996.

By Emily Roberts

NORTH ORANGE COUNTY MAGAZINE: Why did you get into the field?

DR. ROBERT LINGUA: I think all doctors go into medicine because they want to have a positive impact on peoples lives, and what is more precious than our vision?

NOC: How has the field changed since you began?

LINGUA: Probably the two greatest advances have been improved safety and precision of the surgery. On the safety side, patients can elect an "all laser" procedure. LASIK is a two-step process and in most cases a blade is still used in the first step. The new IntraLase laser, used exclusively by our center, allows us to complete that step with a laser. As for precision, the software for the lasers that are used to correct the vision are now guided by customized measurements of a patient's own eye. This technology will personalize the prescription and polish it out to an even more perfect vision.

NOC: Take us through the typical procedure from the patients' point of view.

LINGUA: On the day of the surgery, patients spend about an hour at the center. The first half hour they are given all the instructions they'll need and are offered a pill to relax them. The second half hour is spent in surgery. The eyes are anesthetized, but the patient is alert and can ask questions during the surgery. The only sensation they will have is about 30 seconds of pressure, like if you were to close your eye and gently press. Otherwise, all they'll experience is some flashing lights. When they get off the table, they wear clear protective shields, and the vision they're waiting for will be there the next morning.

NOC: What misconceptions or fears are out there about LASIK surgery?

LINGUA: There are many misunderstandings and fears.

One misconception is that there isn't the proper software to correct their prescription. People think their prescription is inappropriate for the surgery because they have astigmatism, for example. Lasers can do it all now. Each individual, in terms of their

overall candidacy, has to be assessed in terms of their ORBSCAN, which tells us if the lens can be corrected.

Second, patients are afraid of the surgery. They fear that they'll lose vision. Almost all of the cases of this happening in the past were related to using a blade, which is no longer necessary in our center.

Third, patients worry that if with time or age their vision changes, the whole thing is blown and they'll have to go back to glasses and contacts. Not true! Vision can change after LASIK in about 10% of people. However, the surgery can be done again. It's important to ask the doctor: 'If my eyes change, can they be corrected again, and will you charge for a repeat surgery?' It should be a nominal charge, if any.

Fourth, people think they have to wait until they're older. The FDA has approved the surgery as soon as a patient turns 18.

The fifth misconception is that they might move or blink during the surgery and do harm to their eye. There's absolutely nothing they can do to mess it up, as the new lasers can "track" their eye movements.

The final misconception is that you have to leave North Orange County to get the latest technology!

NOC: What is your favorite part of the job?

LINGUA: My favorite part is the one-on-one doctoring and that's the part that I don't want to delegate. All my patients get my cell phone number and they have it if they ever need it. Our great reputation is maintained by the extra care our patients receive. In fact, almost every procedure performed has been a referral from a past happy client. The experience of LASIK vision correction is an exciting life-changing event and it is very rewarding to walk among the people in the community, that I have been able to help.

The Lingua Vision Surgical Center is located at 301 W. Bastanchury Road, Suite 125 in Fullerton. For more information visit www.lingualasik.com or call 714 870-2010 to schedule a complimentary consultation with Dr. Lingua.

Dr. Robert Lingua (top); patient consultation (center); laser eye surgery (bottom).