



Winter 2010

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Mark Fromer, M.D.

Susan Fromer, M.D.

Maurice Luntz, M.D.

Brian Brazzo, M.D.

Julia King, O.D.

Daniele Jean, O.D.

Lisa Modesto, O.D.

Jason Compton, O.D.

Diane Calderon, O.D.

Locations

550 Park Avenue
New York, NY 10065
Tel: 212.832.9228
Fax: 212.751.9482

3130 Grand Concourse
Suite 1J
Bronx, NY 10458
Tel: 718.741.3200
Fax: 718.933.1044

109-33 71st Road
Suite 2C
Forest Hills, NY 11375
Tel: 718.261.3366
Fax: 718.261.6773



Dr. Mark Fromer is the
Eye Surgeon Director
for the
New York Rangers
(National Hockey League)

Management of Diabetic Retinopathy in the 21st Century

For patients with diabetes, improved blood glucose levels and blood pressure levels greatly reduces the risk of diabetic retinopathy and all diabetes complications.

However, if the blood sugar is not controlled, abnormal blood vessels start to grow in the retina. When diabetic retinopathy advances to a level that threatens vision, more aggressive therapy is recommended. Until now, laser therapy (laser photocoagulation) was the standard treatment for diabetic retinopathy, but it has some drawbacks. Because it is harsh by design, some retinal tissue is intentionally sacrificed in order to preserve the function of other more visually important areas of retinal tissue. As a result, patients often experience a loss of peripheral vision, abnormal blind spots, and reduced ability to see at night or dim light. Sometimes, laser treatment simply doesn't work to stop progression of retinopathy. That is why scientists have been trying to develop drug therapies to replace, or at least minimize the need for laser treatment. Scientists have uncovered the biochemical processes that lead to the development and progression of diabetic retinopathy.

One type of drug designed to interrupt the chemical signals causing growth of abnormal retinal blood vessels is Avastin™. It is currently used to treat certain tumors because it suppresses blood vessel growth that promotes their development. After approval by the US Food and Drug Administration it gained access into ophthalmology to treat various types of neovascular diseases.

Cortisone (steroid) medicines are also widely used in combating retinopathy, often in combination with laser treatment. They have been shown to improve or stabilize vision in certain circumstances. Although new drugs for diabetic retinopathy hold great promise, it must be remembered that excellent metabolic control and timely laser treatment are still the current "gold standards" for managing this serious eye disease. These treatments prevent blindness in the overwhelming majority of patients. However, treatment and prevention of diabetic retinopathy in the 21st century will almost certainly involve a combination of therapies that battle the disease from different directions. Hopefully, this strategy will prevent diabetes-related vision loss as well as side-effects caused by treatment itself.

Even though the FDA approves medications for specific uses, a healthcare provider may prescribe a medication to treat a condition other than what it has been approved to treat by the FDA. This is called an "off-label" use. Because the best medication for your situation may be one that is used off-label, be sure to talk with your healthcare provider about the benefits and risks of using a medication off-label.

Educational Programs

- Thursday, February 5, 2009 Dr. Mark Fromer lectured to forty five optometrists on "Innovating the Future of OCT" at Jade Eatery in Forest Hills, Queens.
- Wednesday, May 27, 2009 Dr. Susan Fromer lectured on "Cataract Surgery with the New Toric IOL" and Dr. Mark Fromer lectured on "Innovating the Future of OCT" at LeCirque in Manhattan to sixty five optometrists.
- Thursday, September 17, 2009 Dr. Brian Brazzo lectured on "Methods of Diagnosis and Treatments of Tearing" at Jade Eatery in Queens to fifty optometrists.
- Tuesday, November 10, 2009 Dr. Mark Fromer lectured to sixty optometrists on "The Latest Technologies in Diabetic Retinopathy" at the SUNY School of Optometry in Manhattan.

The above lectures were CE approved by Council on Optometric Practitioner Education

On Wednesday October 21, 2009 Dr. Jason Compton lectured to fifty senior citizens at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House in Manhattan on "The Aging Eye". Dr. Compton spoke on the complications that emerge with aging and the essentials of regular eye examination.

On Wednesday December 2, 2009 Dr. Mark Fromer spoke at the Department of Ophthalmology Grand Rounds on "Diabetic Retinopathy" at Saint Vincent's Hospital and Medical Center to fifty five ophthalmologists.

Practice Highlights

Your picture is now being taken to be used exclusively in your medical record. We have implemented E-prescribing, which submits paperless prescriptions to your pharmacy. We have implemented an automated patient appointment reminder system which will leave a message for you two days before your appointment between 6:00-8:00 pm. We now have an online payment option. Just visit our website at www.fromereye.com, select the 'For patients' tab and then select 'Make a Payment.' We have expanded our weekend hours for your convenience. Children ages five years and older are welcome.

Please be informed of your yearly deductibles, co-insurances and co-payments. Our billing department will be glad to assist you at 718-261-4120. Deductibles, co-insurances and co-payments are implemented by your insurance policy and the type of plan you have and these out-of-pocket expenses are your financial responsibility. Please educate yourself about your insurance plan and yearly financial responsibilities.



Calvin Thomas

Patient Spotlight

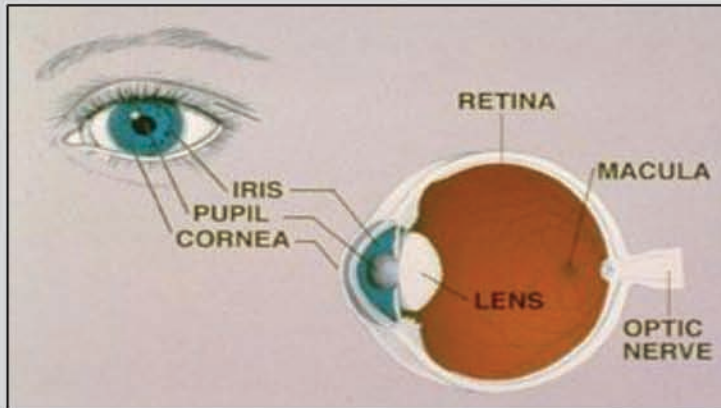
Mr. Calvin Thomas, a New York Police Department officer came to us after a car accident. Mr. Thomas was driving his car when an on-coming car came towards him from the opposite direction. To avoid a head-on collision, Officer Thomas swerved out of the way and hit a fire hydrant. His car's airbag exploded in his face and he was admitted to the emergency room. The emergency room physician advised Officer Thomas to seek follow up care with his doctor after his condition was stabilized. By the time Mr. Calvin was seen by Dr. Mark Fromer, three days later, his vision in his left eye diminished and he could not see anything other than the light. At that time, the back of his eye was filled with blood. Dr. Fromer monitored his eye condition to see if it improved, but unfortunately things turned from bad to worse. Mr. Thomas woke up with a severe pain in his left eye. Dr. Fromer had to perform an emergency surgery on him. The day after surgery, the pain was relieved and his vision improved significantly. After three surgeries and 12 months later, Mr. Thomas's vision was restored.

Thank you Mr. Thomas for your faith in our doctors.

Doctor Mark Fromer and Susan Fromer are members of EyeCare America, a public service foundation of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. EyeCare America's mission is to reduce avoidable blindness and severe visual impairment by raising awareness about eye disease and care, providing free eye health educational materials and facilitating access to medical eye care.

MYTH

1. Reading in dim light is harmful to your eyes.
2. It is not harmful to look at the sun if you squint, or look through narrowed eyelids.
3. Using a computer or video display terminal is harmful to the eyes.
4. If you use your eyes too much, you wear them out.
5. Wearing poorly-fit glasses damages your eyes.
6. Wearing poorly-fit contacts does not harm your eyes.
7. You do not need to have your eyes checked until you are in your forties.
8. Safety goggles are more trouble than they are worth.
9. It is okay to swim while wearing soft contact lenses.
10. If you cross your eyes often, you will become cross-eyed.
11. Children outgrow crossed eyes.
12. A cataract must be ripe before it can be removed.
13. Cataracts can be removed with lasers.
14. Cataracts can spread from one eye to the other eye.
15. Eyes can be transplanted.



Normal Human Eye

The eyes may be the mirrors of the soul, but they are also one of the most misunderstood parts of the body. That explains why there are a lot of eye care myths.

FACT

1. Although reading in dim light can make your eyes feel tired, it is not harmful.
2. Even if you squint, ultra-violet light still gets to your eyes, damaging the cornea, lens and retina. Never look directly at the sun.
3. Although using a computer or video display terminal is associated with eye strain or fatigue, it is not harmful to the eyes.
4. You can use your eyes as much as you wish, they do not wear out.
5. Although good fitting glasses are required for good vision, a poor fit does not damage your eyes.
6. Poorly fit contact lenses can be harmful to your cornea (front of your eye). Make certain your eyes are checked regularly by your ophthalmologist if you wear contact lenses.
7. There are several asymptomatic, yet treatable, eye diseases like glaucoma that can begin prior to your forties.
8. Safety goggles prevent many potentially blinding injuries every year. Keep goggles handy and use them!
9. Potentially blinding eye infections can result from swimming or using a hot tub while wearing contact lenses.
10. Crossed eyes or strabismus is usually congenital (present at birth) or may be due to eye injuries. Either way, the tiny muscles that control the eye movements are affected and one of the eyes becomes misaligned.
11. Children do not outgrow truly crossed eyes. A child whose eyes are misaligned has strabismus and can develop poor vision in one eye (a condition known as amblyopia) because the brain turns off the misaligned or lazy eye. The sooner crossed or misaligned eyes are treated, the less likely the child will have permanently impaired vision.
12. With modern cataract surgery, a cataract does not have to ripen before it is removed. When a cataract keeps you from doing the things you like or need to do, consider having it removed.
13. Cataracts cannot be removed with a laser. The cloudy lens must be removed through a surgical incision. However, after cataract surgery, a membrane within the eye may become cloudy. This membrane can be opened with laser surgery.
14. Cataracts cannot spread from one eye to the other but often they develop in both eyes at the same time.
15. The eye cannot be transplanted. It is connected to the brain by the optic nerve, which cannot be reconnected once it has been detached. The cornea, the clear front part of the eye, can be transplanted. Surgeons often use plastic intraocular lens implants (IOLs) to replace natural lenses removed during cataract surgery.

How do I know if I need eye glasses????

Knowing whether or not you need glasses may sound like a very simple thing to figure out, but it could be a bit more complicated than you think. Your eyesight may be deteriorating gradually; so slowly that you get accustomed to how you view things and never even know that any change has taken place. There are different symptoms associated with different ocular problems. It is important to recognize them and to become sensitive to the frequency of them. Recognizing them should motivate you to have your eyes tested by a professional to enjoy a better lifestyle afterwards. If you go from a room that is dark into an area of light and you find that it takes your vision an exceedingly long period to recover from the change, or if you see "halos" or have other inconsistencies in your vision while it is adjusting, it may be a sign that your vision needs some correction.

If you seem to be suffering from recurrent headaches or migraines that don't seem to have any association with allergies, illness, or injury, it could mean that you need to have corrective lenses to help your vision. Extended periods of trying to compensate for weakened vision can lead to frequent headaches. If your eyes feel weak and tired in what seems to be a shorter time period after participating in things like reading or viewing a computer screen, it could be time to have your eyes examined to see if corrective lenses might be the answer to your problem.

Most people don't follow the suggestion of having their eyes examined by a professional at least once every year. Visiting an eye doctor is really the only accurate way to determine if you need any level of vision correction and what course of action may be necessary in order to get you seeing properly again.

There are a number of reasons that visiting your eye care professional is of the utmost importance. Having your vision problems corrected could also do wonders for your health. Not having to labor to see, results in less headaches, less back and neck aches plus, you will feel more alert and awake overall. Your performance will most likely improve at work as well as in any hobbies you enjoy that require fine detail. Properly identifying vision problems on your own is impossible. In order to really know if you need glasses, it is necessary to have an examination at the office of an eye care professional.

For more information please visit us at www.fromereye.com

At Fromer Eye Centers, Our Board Certified Ophthalmologists and Optometrists are among the most experienced and knowledgeable in their fields.

At Fromer Eye Centers our goal is to provide you with excellent eye care. Your experience in our office is very important to us. We strive to create a team that provides the best medicine and technology available to our patients in a compassionate manner. Each member of our team is carefully handpicked. Our employees undergo ongoing training to be the absolute best in their areas of expertise. This includes all staff members from our front desk staff to our technicians, managerial staff and doctors.

Our doctors lecture regularly to other eye care professionals and attend national meetings to keep them informed on all of the latest changes in our field. Our center is at the cutting edge of providing our patients with the latest modalities for the diagnosis and treatment of eye diseases. We are proud that so many of our colleagues have chosen Fromer Eye Centers as a tertiary referral center for the treatment of complex eye cases.

Some of the treatments that we have instituted this year have saved the sight of many of our diabetic and macular degeneration patients through the use of new pharmacologic agents. Through the use of new microscopic surgical techniques we have performed thousands of surgical procedures without the use of sutures, reducing the time spent by patients in the operating room, decreasing post operative pain and allowing more rapid healing times for our patients.

From a technological standpoint, our office offers the highest standard of technology available in our field. All of our equipment is linked to our electronic medical records system so it can be accessed instantaneously by our physicians at anytime and anywhere in the world. A picture can be taken of any part of your eye, in any of our locations, and be evaluated at any of our other locations immediately. This is fascinating technology that is used by less than ten percent of physicians in the United States.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our patients for entrusting Fromer Eye Centers with the care of one of your most valuable possessions, your sight. I wish you all health and happiness in the new decade to come.

Sincerely,
 Dr. Mark Fromer
 Medical Director
 Fromer Eye Centers



On Sunday, October 4, 2009 about 40 of our staff, friends and family joined over 3200 walkers at Battery Park in Manhattan to raise money for the research to find a cure for diabetes. The Walk to Cure Diabetes raised total of \$1,370,000. As result of all the research diabetics are living healthier and longer lives.

Fromer Eye Centers' team raised \$5,000.00

**Diabetic Retinopathy • Sutureless Cataract Surgery • Glaucoma • Macular Degeneration • Botox
 Laser Vision Correction • Age Related Retinal Diseases • Plastic, Cosmetic & Reconstructive Eye Surgery**

PRST STD
 US POSTAGE
PAID
 LINDENHURST, NY 11757
 PERMIT NO. 57

550 Park Avenue
 New York, NY 10065
 Tel: 212.832.9228
www.fromereye.com

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