

Boost for anti-allergy vaccine

An anti-allergy vaccine has worked well in early tests, say its makers, UK company Cytos Biotechnology. Patients with allergies caused by house dust mite were reported to be 100 times more resistant after jabs. Further research is needed to prove its effectiveness.



Better future is in sight

Dr Vandana Jain

People cannot wait to trade in glasses for lenses or corrective surgery. But it is important to be well-informed.

CONTACT LENS CARE

Biocompatibility with the eye is at least as important, if not more, as it is with conventional lenses since they may allow less oxygen to reach the surface of the eye, in addition to disrupting the tear film. Corneal ulcers and infections are associated with the use of cosmetic contact lenses. Uncontrolled infection can lead to corneal scarring and vision impairment. In extreme cases, this can result in blindness and eyeloss. Other risks include conjunctivitis, corneal swelling, allergic reactions, corneal abrasion from poor lens fit and reduced vision. Appropriate handling, and hygiene are essential, as is complying with wearing times and frequency of replacement recommended by an ophthalmologist.

LOWDOWN ON LASIK

Contact lenses had become "just intolerable" for Ritu, who had worn them for two decades. So last month she opted for Lasik (Laser-Assisted in Situ Keratomileusis), an eye surgery in which lasers were used on the cornea to obliterate slivers of tissue, and improve

the eye's ability to see. With advanced machines that use wave-front technology, customized and precise excision is possible. But

potential candidates should be well educated on benefits and risks, understand the importance of a thorough screening, and have realistic expectations about the outcome. Anita Chauhan would agree. She had a corneal transplant after she developed a complication from a Lasik procedure. Chauhan had ignored warnings from numerous specialists about the thinness of her cornea. It resulted in further thinning and abnormal bulging of her cornea 10 years after the surgery. "She was in horrific pain," says her mother, Sushma, who lobbies for awareness about Lasik. Lasik may not be the right option if:

- You take medication that will interfere with healing, such as steroids.
- You have an autoimmune disease, a major illness or chronic condition.
- You have a prescription for glasses that changes often.
- Pupil size, tear production and corneal thickness are not suitable.

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