



(left) Sabal Eye Care offers a wide selection of today's latest frames and lenses. (below) Dr. Chris Pearson demonstrates an Ortho-K exam. Even young patients can greatly benefit from the non-surgical corrective eye treatment.



PROTECTING the MIRACLE of SIGHT

By Kevin Fritz

From corrective treatments to fashionable frames, **Dr. Christopher Pearson of Sabal Eye Care** offers the latest in high-tech advancements for your total eye health.

It's the beginning of the year, and for many people that means time to make a resolution. The New Year is a great time to start a new exercise routine or quit smoking, but it's also a great time to resolve to see better. For the past seven years, **Dr. Christopher Pearson**, owner of **Sabal Eye Care** in Longwood, has been helping people do just that. And in the process, he has earned accolades and praise for his expertise in Ortho-K, a non-surgical corrective eye treatment, and for his commitment to his patients.

"We are dedicated to not only meeting expectations, but exceeding them," says Dr. Pearson. "We are also unique in the services we provide."

At Sabal Eye Care, Dr. Pearson treats eye infections and glaucoma, removes foreign bodies and performs eye exams. Total eye health for all members of the family, from children to seniors, is his specialty. He also conducts pre- and post-op care and co-manages treatment for cataract surgery, macular degeneration treatments and Lasik surgery, with top surgeons in Central Florida. "We perform full-scope optometry," he says. "We take care of everything except the actual surgery."

As you would expect, he can also fit you into a new pair of glasses or contacts, including lenses, bifocals and astigmatism. "We have the reputation of being able to fit people in contacts who may have been turned away elsewhere,"

Dr. Pearson notes. He says it comes down to knowing the products and strict attention to measurements. Indeed, the term optometry comes from the Greek word "optos," meaning eye or vision, and "metria," meaning measurement.

Dr. Pearson is also one of the few eye doctors certified to perform Ortho-K (Corneal Refractive Therapy), which is the answer for many who want to shed their glasses and be done with the day-to-day ritual of contacts, but don't want to have Lasik surgery.

By wearing a special pair of contact lenses at night, this high-tech therapy actually reshapes the cornea while you sleep.

"They sleep their prescription away," says Dr. Pearson regarding Ortho-K patients. "It is one of the only [procedures] available that can slow down myopia [nearsightedness]." He adds that, unlike surgery, the treatment is not perma-

nent and patients have the option of returning their eyes back to the way they were simply by stopping the treatment. "It's the only versatile product like this we can offer our patients."

Caring for Children

Dr. Pearson says that even kids are great candidates for Ortho-K therapy. He explains that it is beneficial for children who are into sports because it allows them to participate without the nuisance of wearing contacts or glasses.

A Florida native and happily married father of three, Dr. Pearson received his undergraduate degree at University of Central Florida and finished his graduate studies at the Southern College of Optometry in Memphis, Tenn. While there, he received numerous scholarships and awards in chemistry, academic excellence and community service. Throughout his studies, he paid special attention to pediatric eye care and especially enjoys working with children.

For example, Dr. Pearson offers free back to school vision screenings so that all children can see clearly. He also supports InfantSEE, a no-cost public health program developed to provide professional eye care for infants nationwide. "Just because they see 20-20 and pass the school screening doesn't mean everything is okay," he explains. He says there are other visual functional issues, such as tracking or focusing, that can affect a child's learning and reading skills.

Dr. Pearson also specializes in visual therapy for children called HTS, a revolutionary advancement in eye care. A computerized program provides fitness training for the eye muscles and helps eliminate the symptoms of eyestrain—something that can't be corrected with contacts or glasses. He explains that, once you teach your eye muscles how to work their best, they don't forget. "Kids say it's like a computer game," he adds.

The therapy is a computer program that children access online, and Dr. Pearson monitors their progress over the Internet. Patients wear special glasses with flippers carrying different strengths and use the software daily for approximately 20 minutes, five days a week. The therapy usually takes about two to two and a half months.

"The brain gets trained to work more efficiently," he explains, "and learns how to focus better. A lot of children are born without the ability to focus."

He also says that school eye screenings are a

good means for diagnosing some abnormalities, especially nearsightedness. But hyperopic—farsightedness—is harder to pick up in a simple school screening. "These children get missed all the time," he states.

He adds that it's a misconception that children with eye trouble have to wear glasses, explaining he fits many grade school children with contacts. "Young children, as well as adults, love the freedom that comes with the vision they get from wearing contacts," Dr. Pearson says.

High-Tech & Fashionable, Too

Sabal Eye Care patients have the confidence they are being treated by, and are privy to, the latest advancements in eye care. As a board member of the Central Florida Society of Optometric Physicians, Dr. Pearson has been in charge of the group's industry relations for four years, which means he acts as a volunteer liaison between the organization and manufacturers. He also organizes the society's continuing education programs and meetings throughout the year.

"It helps me stay on top of the most current technologies and treatments that are coming out," he says, which is why he utilizes the latest technology and equipment, whether it be for fitting glasses or contacts, conducting therapy or helping to cure an eye infection.

In addition to being on the cutting-edge of eye care, Dr. Pearson can help you look marvelous, too. In fact, he is an exclusive provider in the area for the **Kazuo Kawasaki** designer frames made famous by last year's Republican vice presidential candidate **Sarah Palin**. Or perhaps you prefer the stylish look of **Oakley** or **Maui Jim**. Either way, Sabal Eye Care is a full provider of no-line bifocals, trifocals and Crizal (anti-glare) lenses and trendsetting frames for the beach or the office.

So this new year, be a new you with new frames or new contacts—or ditch the glasses all together by beginning Ortho-K. For the very best in total eye health for the whole family, Dr. Pearson is the doctor to see. ■



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