



# Eye Care Insight

Spring/Summer 2007

## BAPTIST EYE SURGEONS



... A Commitment to Lifestyle

### Our Physicians are Board Certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology

Marc A. Bodenheimer, M.D.

L. Nichols Cook, M.D.

Robert E. Hall, M.D.

Albert K. Holmes, M.D.

Mark Y. Ivens, M.D.

James R. Kimble, M.D.

J. Franklin Murchison, Jr., M.D.

Darin S. Smith, M.D.

William R. Sullivan, M.D.

### Two Convenient Locations

#### Baptist Eye Institute

2020 Kay Street  
Knoxville, TN 37920  
865-579-3920

#### Tennessee Valley Eye Center

140 Capital Drive  
Knoxville, TN 37922  
865-579-3920

Visit our Website:  
[www.baptisteye.com](http://www.baptisteye.com)

## Latest Technology in Glaucoma Treatment Now Available

*Baptist Eye Surgeons encourage glaucoma sufferers to find out more about laser technology for the treatment of glaucoma.*

To provide patients with the latest alternatives in glaucoma treatment, the Baptist Eye Surgeons are pleased to announce the availability of Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty (SLT), a progressive new treatment in the fight to stop the progression of glaucoma. This new therapy is now available at the Baptist Eye Institute and Tennessee Valley Eye Center.

Screening and early intervention is critical to detecting and stopping the relentless progression of glaucoma," said James R. Kimble, M.D. "The Baptist Eye Surgeons are proud to offer this breakthrough laser treatment that has been clinically proven to reduce intraocular pressure (IOP) which has been attributed to the progression of glaucoma. With virtually no side effects and thereby eliminating or reducing the quantity of prescription medications, eye drops, surgery and other invasive treatments required to control the disease, SLT may be the ideal treatment modality." he added.

Certain groups of people have been shown to be at increased risk for developing glaucoma. These groups include: people over the age of 40, people who have a family history of glaucoma, African and Hispanic Americans, people who have diabetes, hypertension, myopia (nearsightedness), poor ocular circulation, a previous eye injury, people who have used steroid/cortisone medications on a long-term basis and especially people with elevated intraocular pressure.

Selective Laser Trabeculoplasty can be administered in an office setting to lower the eye pressure that is symptomatic of glaucoma. SLT does not cause scarring or damage to the eye like other laser treatments and has been shown to effectively keep pressure lower for up to four years. SLT may also be an alternative for patients who have been treated unsuccessfully with laser surgery in the past or with pressure lowering eye drops.



**Dr. Kimble**

*"The Baptist Eye Surgeons are proud to offer this breakthrough laser treatment."*

# Performing the Visual Field Test

**The visual field test measures your peripheral vision, also called your side vision. Many diseases can reduce your peripheral vision.** To diagnose and treat these conditions, we must carefully measure the peripheral vision. Your peripheral vision is measured with a special test called a visual field test.

Taking a visual field test can be challenging, and the results are only useful if you can perform the test well. Each eye will be tested separately, and the eye not being tested will be covered with an eye patch. To get started, your head will be comfortably positioned in the visual field machine. The test takes 5-10 minutes per eye, and if you are uncomfortable, you will not be able to do a good job taking the test. If you are not comfortable, tell your technician so you can be adjusted until you're comfortable.

Once you are comfortably positioned, you will be looking into a dimly-lit bowl. Your technician will ask you to stare at a small target light in the middle of the bowl. Your job is to keep staring at that spot throughout the whole test. You may blink your eyes whenever you need to—this will not affect the test.

Before the test begins, you will be handed a small device with a button on it. Try pushing the button a few times before starting the test. If you have arthritis or any other health problem



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*During the test, you should keep looking straight at your small target even when you see the test lights in your peripheral vision—if you move your eyes to look at them, the test is no longer measuring your peripheral vision.*

that makes it hard for you to push the button in your hand, now is the time to tell your technician.

During the test, small lights will appear throughout the bowl. Your job is to push the button every time you see one of the lights. Pushing the button is how the machine knows you saw that light. If you see a light but don't push the button, the machine will think you did not see that light. Don't worry about missing lights when you blink—the machine will come back to each spot you missed and check it again.

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**Taking a visual field test can be challenging, and the results are only useful if you can perform the test well.**

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You should keep looking straight at your small target even when you see the test lights in your peripheral vision—if you move your eyes to look at them, the test is no longer measuring your peripheral vision. The machine keeps track of whether you look around or not, and if you look around too much, your doctor may not be able to use your test results and you may have to repeat the entire test.

You may hear some sounds during the test. The machine makes noises while the test is performed. If you hear noises but do not see lights, don't worry—sometimes the machine shines lights too small or too dim to be seen, or doesn't shine any lights at all, just to make sure you aren't hitting the button every time you hear the noise. If you hit the button even when you don't see the light, your test results may not be useful and you may need to repeat the test.

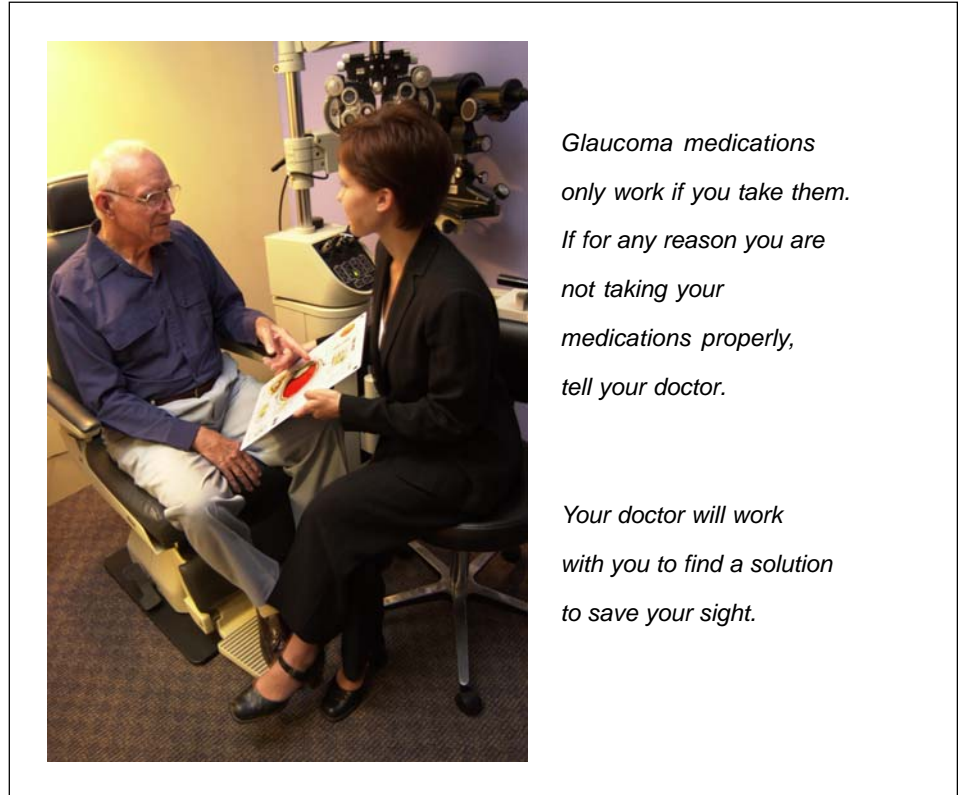
**When the test is complete, the machine will print out a map of your peripheral vision. The pattern of this map tells your doctor where you can see and where you can't see.**

# Why It Is Important that You Take Your Glaucoma Medications Regularly

**Glaucoma is an eye disease that can lead to blindness. The risk of blindness can be greatly reduced with treatment.** Treatment for glaucoma often consists of eye drop medications that lower the pressure in the eye, because high eye pressure plays an important role in causing the damage that destroys sight. Many different eye drop medications are available to lower eye pressure, but they all have one thing in common—they only work if you take them.

Taking your glaucoma medication as directed by your doctor is extremely important in saving your vision. Glaucoma is called the silent thief of sight because the vision loss in glaucoma happens slowly over time and does not have any symptoms. Glaucoma does not cause pain, or redness or swelling of the eyes. The goal of glaucoma treatment is not to make anything better, but to keep it from getting worse. Some people stop using their drops because the drops don't seem to be making their vision any better. So it is important to understand that even if your drops are working well, you will not notice any improvement in your eyes or vision.

Once the damage is done it can never be undone, so the goal of glaucoma treatment is to lower IOP to prevent any further damage and vision loss. There are many reasons why people with glaucoma do not take their medications as directed by their doctor. Many eye drop medications have side effects, and some people stop using their drops to avoid the side effects. Burning and stinging, blurry vision or even headache, right after putting the



*Glaucoma medications only work if you take them. If for any reason you are not taking your medications properly, tell your doctor.*

*Your doctor will work with you to find a solution to save your sight.*

drops in, are common side effects that cause people to stop using their drops. If you drops are causing side effects severe enough to make you stop taking them, tell your doctor. Your doctor will work with you to find a treatment that you can tolerate better.

Some people have difficulty remembering to put their drops in regularly as prescribed. Using drops only once in a while only lowers eye pressure once in a while, and damage can still occur when eye pressure is high between drops. The only way to prevent further damage is to use your drops on a regular basis as prescribed. If you have trouble remembering to take your glaucoma eye medication, tell your doctor. There are ways to adjust your treatment schedule to help you remember to use your drops regularly.

Most glaucoma medications are expensive, and some people don't take the medication because they cannot afford them. Tell your doctor if you cannot afford your eye drops. There may be less expensive alternative treatments that you can use. Also, many drug companies have programs to assist patients who need medicine but cannot afford them. You may be eligible to receive your medicine at a reduced or no cost.

**Remember that glaucoma medications only work if you take them. If for any reason you are not taking your medications properly, tell your doctor. Your doctor will work with you to find a solution to save your sight.**

# Meet the Baptist Eye Surgeons Team of Physicians

## EXCELLENCE IN EYE CARE

All members of the Baptist Eye Surgeons physician team are board certified by the American Board of Ophthalmology.



**Marc A. Bodenheimer, MD**  
*Cataract & refractive surgery,  
corneal & external disease,  
general ophthalmology*



**L. Nichols Cook, MD**  
*Cataract & refractive surgery,  
general ophthalmology*



**Robert E. Hall, MD**  
*Cataract & refractive surgery,  
general ophthalmology*



**Albert K. Holmes, MD**  
*Cataract & refractive surgery,  
cosmetic & general ophthalmology*



**Mark Y. Ivens, MD**  
*Cataract & refractive surgery,  
general ophthalmology*



**James R. Kimble, MD**  
*Cataract, refractive & glaucoma  
surgery, general ophthalmology*



**J. Franklin Murchison, Jr., MD**  
*Cataract & refractive surgery,  
corneal & external disease,  
general ophthalmology*



**Darin S. Smith, MD**  
*Cataract & refractive surgery,  
general ophthalmology*



**William R. Sullivan, MD**  
*General ophthalmology*

## Baptist Eye Surgeons: Office Locations

**Baptist Eye Surgeons at the Baptist Eye Institute**  
2020 Kay Street • Knoxville, TN 37920  
Phone: 865-579-3920 • Fax: 865-579-3963

**Baptist Eye Surgeons at the Tennessee Valley Eye Center**  
140 Capital Drive • Knoxville, TN 37922  
Phone: 865-579-3920 • Fax: 865-579-3963