

Patients of all ages find professional eye care at Avery Eye Clinic

By Ruth Fields
Courier Advertising Writer

When Dr. Baptiste Dejean scrubbed for surgery several months ago, it was for a procedure that not every ophthalmologist would have considered. It wasn't the surgery – cataract removal – that made the case unusual.

It wasn't even the implantation of a high-tech, multifocal lens. What made the surgery out of the ordinary was the fact that the patient was Dejean's own mother, Edwina Dejean.

While some physicians might fear losing their objectivity while operating on family members, Dejean, a partner at Avery Eye Clinic, had a different rationale for performing his mother's surgery.

"I wanted to make sure it was done right," he said. "I had the confidence I wouldn't necessarily have had if I had handed it off to someone else."

Dejean, who has been practicing since 1997, performs about 500 cataract removal surgeries per year. Based on this extensive experience, he recommended a unique approach to treat his mother's deteriorating vision.

In one eye, he implanted a traditional replacement lens; in the other, he implanted a high-tech, multifocal lens. While multi-focal lenses are ideal for many cataract patients, they tend to cause "halos" at night. Because Dejean's mother often drives at night, he believed his mother would benefit from a dual approach.

Today, Dejean's mother has the restored vision for which she had hoped. While she may be the proudest of Dejean's patients, she is among many patients of all ages who wouldn't dream of going anywhere other than Avery Eye Clinic for their eye care.

Avery Eye Clinic, founded by Dr. Maple Avery in 1976, proudly continues its tradition of providing total eye care for the Conroe area. Today, Avery is semi-retired and the clinic is staffed by Dejean and Dr. Craig Kuglen, Jr., Dr. Linda Lin and Dr. Gurpreet Singh. Avery Eye Clinic treats patients from newborns to the elderly, both in its large, state-of-the-art facility in Conroe and in Huntsville, where construction will soon begin on a similar facility.

Among Avery Eye Clinic's most grateful patients is a teen-ager who, from the time she was born, could see only

light. After complicated surgery, she can now discern images and has a much better quality of life than before.

Another is a Hurricane Katrina evacuee whose dire vision problems were made more difficult because all of his ophthalmologic records were lost in the storm. Dejean worked extensively with the patient, who needed emergency glaucoma surgery.

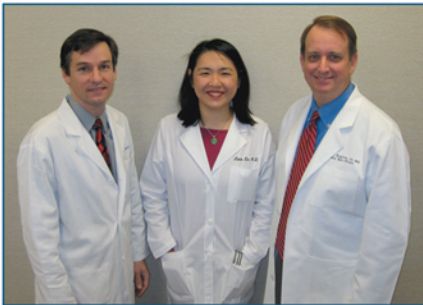
"He liked the way he was cared for here," Dejean said. In fact, the patient had such a good experience at Avery Eye Clinic, he decided to stay in Montgomery County permanently.

The professionals at Avery Eye Clinic know just how important vision is to patients' overall well-being and quality of life, so the clinic's staff – now numbering 30 – strives to provide total eye care with unsurpassed professionalism. Some have made this their lifelong goals. Mary Eiland, clinic administrator, has been working at the clinic for more than 30 years; Marietta Prater and Marilyn Kennedy have been working there for more than 20 years. Mandy Scarborough, the practice's contact lens specialist, has been working at the clinic since 1997.

During their long careers at Avery Eye Clinic, staff members have observed that many patients return year after year. "They tell me they feel comfortable here," Eiland said. "They don't feel like they're just a number. We treat people like individuals. A lot of our patients have been coming for so long, they tell us they feel like they are a part of Avery Eye Clinic."

All of the doctors at Avery Eye Clinic are ophthalmologists – medical and surgical physicians who specialize in the eye. Ophthalmologists follow a rigorous educational regimen, earning four-year college degrees, then attending four-year medical schools, plus internships, residencies and sometimes fellowships. Ophthalmologists, Dejean said, typically train for at least 12 years before beginning to practice.

Ophthalmologists not only diagnose and treat visual deficiencies with glasses or contact lenses, but also treat more serious disorders, such as glaucoma and diabetic eye disease, and perform eye surgeries as well. While cataract removal is by far the most common eye surgery that Avery Eye Clinic surgeons perform, they also perform a growing number of LASIK surgeries. New, all-laser custom LASIK surgery, Dejean noted, is now approved for use in NASA astronauts



The medical staff at Avery Eye Clinic includes (from left to right), Baptiste Dejean, M.D., FACS, Linda Lin, M.D., Craig Kuglen, Jr., M.D. and (not pictured) Gurpreet Singh, M.D.

Open house to highlight eye care

Avery Eye Clinic will host an open house on Saturday, June 12 from 10 a.m. until noon to introduce the many facets of the practice to residents of the surrounding area. June 12 is also the last day that residents can enter Avery Eye Clinic's contest to win free LASIK surgery (a \$4,400 value). The winner may elect to undergo surgery or transfer the prize to another person.

Attendees of the open house will also have the opportunity to win a three month supply of contact lenses or two pairs of UV-rated, non-prescription sunglasses. To underscore the need for children and adults to protect their eyes from exposure to ultraviolet light, the open house will also include a fashion show featuring sunglasses.

The open house will give local residents the opportunity to view informational videos and to discuss LASIK, cataracts and other eye issues with the medical staff of Avery Eye Clinic.

For more information or to enter the LASIK surgery contest, visit Avery Eye Clinic online at averyeyeclinic.com.

and pilots in the United States armed forces.

LASIK surgery is most commonly used to permanently correct common visual deficiencies such as myopia (nearsightedness); however, Avery Eye Clinic doctors have also used LASIK to help other patients. For example, Dejean recently operated on a woman in her late seventies who had been told that nothing else could be done to help her vision. Plagued with astigmatism and nearsightedness in one eye and farsightedness in the other, each eye had widely different vision. Custom LASIK provided a way to bring the eyes into better harmony, resulting in significant improvement in the patient's vision and comfort.

While Avery Eye Clinic helps patients who have frightening visual disorders, the clinic also helps those who have routine concerns, giving them the peace of mind that their valuable eyesight is being treated with the best the area has to offer.

"We take care of all of our patients' eye needs," Dejean said, "anything from glasses or contacts to major surgery."

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