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New Lasik laser provides quick, superior results
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LAWRENCEVILLE — Shelia Dickens is seeing things a bit more clearly these days. The Lawrenceville resident has been wearing glasses since third grade. As she got older, her eyesight digressed to the point where the 46-year-old needed contacts and two pairs of glasses just to get through the day. At night, driving was nearly impossible. She could not see anything and had to rely on counting her steps when she got up in the middle of the night.

“Life was pretty miserable,” Dickens said. “I couldn’t go anywhere hardly. I was a banker and just to see the computer was a daily struggle.”

Fed up and feeling like if she did not do anything that she would go blind, Dickens began researching the possibly of Lasik surgery, a corrective surgery done on approved patients to help restore 20/20 eyesight. She first looked into a procedure in Texas before coming across Emory Laser Vision in Atlanta and the Allegretto Wave laser.

Emory Laser Vision purchased the first Allegretto Wave laser in Georgia. The Allegretto Wave system is the first new laser to receive approval in the United States since 1999. It is made by a German company and had been used in Europe a few years before it was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in 2003. Emory Laser Vision has been treating patients with it since July 2004.

It is the fastest laser system in the United States today, using PerfectPulse Technology to safely and accurately control every single laser pulse from start to finish. The system represents a new generation of refractive technology conducting High Performance Vision Correction that patients can rely on night and day. The Allegretto Wave offers a customized treatment that incorporates wavefront principles to patients with nearsightedness and even farsightedness, according to the Emory Laser Vision Web site. Emory Laser Vision uses the Allegretto Wave laser because is has shown in clinical studies to provide superior results, said Emory Laser Vision’s Medical Director Dr. Doyle Stulting.

“Before, we had people who came in and said they weren’t as happy as they thought they’d be with the results,” he said. “Now, people are absolutely thrilled with the technology and couldn’t be happier.”

The Allegretto Wave can preserve or improve quality of vision in regard to glare and night driving glare.

“Before this, regular Lasik only worked on a small part of the central cornea,” Stulting said. “Patients were complaining of things like halos, especially in dimly lit areas, a time when the pupil is dilated.”

Wavefront technology is used in the Allegretto Wave. It is an advanced method for measuring optical distortions in the eye. As a result, physicians can now customize the Lasik procedure according to each individual patient’s unique vision correction needs. The wavefront system works by measuring how light is distorted as it passes into the eye and then is reflected back. This creates an optical map of the eye, highlighting individual imperfections, according to the Web site.

Dickens said she went to the Emory Vision Center and was seen by each doctor. The doctor who ended up doing her surgery was Dr. J. Bradley Randleman. On the day of her surgery, she was told to remove her glasses before entering the room. She was led to her chair, where the doctor spent about 13 seconds on each eye, she said.

“They then asked me if I could see (the doctors),” she said. “I almost cried. I could see them perfectly. It was a miracle.”

Dickens said she had no pain and was very happy with her results. She said her eyes were almost at 20/20 and she now could walk around in the dark without fear of hurting herself.

“I would recommend this surgery to anyone,” she said. “For the first time in so many years I am free of glasses.”