

COMMENTARY | Eye, eye doc

Surgery is an option for glaucoma

By Dr. Rajesh Khanna
Special to the Acorn

When it comes to proper glaucoma management, various treatments can reduce or eliminate the condition. However, when initial treatments such as iStent or lasers are not effective, surgery using an Ex-Press shunt can offer hope. While this particular form of surgery does have potential complications, it is also proven to be effective when previous treatments have not been fully successful.



Dr. Khanna

Ex-Press shunt surgery involves the placement of a flexible tube and silicone drainage pouch in the eye so excess fluid will drain away. Most of the time this particular type of surgery is performed if traditional glaucoma bleb surgery—called a trabeculectomy—has already been performed and did not work or if a person is likely to form scar tissue around the eye.

Ex-Press shunt surgeries are performed on an outpatient basis. A follow-up appointment usually occurs within 24 hours and then weekly or monthly after the surgery, which will depend on how the recovery is going.

The surgery is usually followed by treatment with antibiotics and steroid drops. Anti-glaucoma drops have been discontinued.

Anti-inflammation medicines can be used as well depending on how the surgery turns out.

Ex-Press shunt provides great hope when drops and lasers are not sufficient. It is safer and has fewer side effects than a traditional glaucoma bleb surgery

called trabeculectomy. It is also less cumbersome than previous generation of shunts.

Ex-Press shunt does not have to be removed and works continuously, so it is more convenient and effective than administering drops. Cost savings on drops is a plus point too.

Although this form of treatment is recommended, there are some risks involved in Ex-Press shunt tube drainage surgery to consider.

Risks can include inflammation, bleeding, softening of the eyeball, affected vision and high pressure in the eye.

There is a chance of scar tissue forming around the device as well, though there are medications to circumvent this possibility. The softening of the eyeball because of the loss of fluid may lead to cataracts.

Infections are always possible, but again minimized due to medications and follow-up treatment. Also, there is the possibility of blood building up in the eye or that the muscles that control the eye become unbalanced which may result in double vision.

All things considered, Ex-Press shunt surgery, when performed correctly, is a popular treatment when previous efforts at correcting glaucoma have failed. The surgery itself offers a reduced chance of scarring. When fully successful there is no follow-up treatment required.

This relatively straightforward procedure is one that offers hope for those who have not had success with previous treatments. While there are risks with this form of surgery, the benefits are considerable when successful.

For more information, visit www.KhannaInstitute.com or call (805) 230-2126.

Hearing loss open house

The Ventura County Chapter of the Hearing Loss Association will host a meet-and-greet open house for the community from 1 to 3 p.m. Sat., March 7 at the Goebel Adult Community Center, 1385 E. Janss Road, Thousand Oaks.

Guests can learn how to be comfortable with their hearing loss, what is available to make their everyday life easier and how to communicate with people.

Guests can also share their challenges, questions and experiences with people who will understand what they are going through.

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Brain injury retreat to coming to Simi Valley

The third annual Brain Injury Retreat will take place from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sat., March 28 and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sun., March 29 at the American Jewish University, Brandeis-Bardin Campus, 1101 Pepper Tree Lane, Simi Valley.

The event will have workshops, activities and a chance to

socialize with peers in an atmosphere of acceptance.

Cost for the retreat is \$80 for both days if booked before March 1. After March 1, the cost is \$90 for both days, \$60 for Saturday only with lunch and dinner included, or \$40 for Sunday only with brunch included.

Scholarships are available for those in need. For those who need overnight lodging, a block of rooms at the Grand Vista Hotel, 999 Enchanted Way, has been reserved for \$82 per night plus tax.

To register, to inquire about booking a hotel room or for more information, call (805) 490-8211.

Measles

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of kindergartners have had their full regimen of the MMR vaccine. Ladera Elementary has the lowest rate in the district, with 60 percent of kindergartners vaccinated.

But among all the city's public schools, Bridges Charter School, which is under the umbrella of the Ventura County Board of Education, not CVUSD, has the lowest MMR vaccination rate—just 48 percent of kindergartners.

Juliet Herman, Bridges' acting director, said she's not especially surprised the school might have a higher opt-out rate than traditional schools. Parents at charter schools have already chosen something outside of the mainstream for their children.

"Individual families make individual choices," she said.

Herman said she's also not par-

ticularly worried about the school due to the protocol established by the county.

"I've been in touch with the communicable disease (department) as well as the county office of education as well as other charter schools and we all have plans for a course of action should a case arise," she said.

The school would notify parents and follow the steps outlined by the board of education, including notifying the public healthcare agency, which would determine if under-immunized students need to stay home for up to 21 days.

When contacted, Bridges parents who have opted out of the vaccines for their children chose not to comment.

Meadows Arts and Technology Elementary—the city's other charter school, which also is not part of CVUSD—has a vaccination rate of 90 percent for its kindergartners.

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