

## LASIK eye surgery: Is it for you?

Before having LASIK eye surgery, most patients couldn't imagine waking up in the morning and seeing the alarm clock without glasses.

They never dreamed they'd be able to drive a car, watch a movie



Dr. Rebecca Wincek Bateson has a private practice at 678 Philadelphia St. and practices optometry with Dr. Mike Yuhas and Dr. Greg Caldwell.

or enjoy sports such as swimming and skiing without contact lenses. This dependence on glasses and contacts has shaped their lives, memories and the way LASIK patients have felt about themselves. Now, these same patients are pursuing life with new confidence, enthusiasm and ease, thanks to

LASIK. This procedure takes only a few minutes to perform, but can have a tremendous impact on your life.

### WHAT IS LASIK?

LASIK (Laser-Assisted-In-Situ Keratomileusis) is currently one of the most frequently performed elective procedures in North America. It is a highly effective outpatient procedure that is suitable for most low, moderate and higher glasses prescriptions. LASIK uses a cool beam of light from the excimer laser to gently reshape the front surface (cornea) of the eye.

Good candidates are at least 18 years of age, in good general health, and with no eye diseases such as cataracts or glaucoma. A screening with your eye doctor is the best way to determine if you are a candidate and what your probable outcome may be.

Good candidates should be free of eye diseases. Candidates should be free of certain eye viruses including herpes simplex and herpes zoster. Good candidates should also be free of certain health problems including uncontrolled diabetes, autoimmune or collagen vascular disease, and any medication or condition that renders the patient immunocompromised.

Patients should make their doctor aware of certain eye problems including amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (muscle imbalance), severe dry eyes, previous eye surgery or injury, or any recurrent, residual or active eye conditions that may affect healing. Other conditions that should be relayed to the doctor include keloid scarring with surgical healing, back problems, claustrophobia or other psychological problems, that may affect surgery or recovery.

It is critical that a potential laser vision correction candidate has obtained a stable eyeglass prescription for at least one year.

### WHAT IS CUSTOM LASIK?

While conventional LASIK has been a complete revolution in vision correction, the latest in laser vision correction technology is custom LASIK. Custom LASIK is a procedure that enables your surgeon to further customize the conventional LASIK procedure to your individual eyes. This customized procedure may result in patients seeing clearer and sharper than ever before. FDA studies show that custom LASIK may produce better vision than is possible with contact lenses or glasses. In clinical studies, custom LASIK has been able to provide patients with:

- A greater chance of having 20/20 vision
- The potential for better vision than is possible with contacts or glasses
- Less incidence of glare and halos
- Potentially better vision, even at night.

### WHAT IS BLADELESS LASIK?

In the LASIK and custom LASIK procedures, a flap of corneal tissue must be created and then folded back. The cornea is the transparent dome-like structure that covers the iris and pupil. By creating a flap in the cornea, the surgeon is able to perform the laser vision correction treatment on the inner layer of the cornea and allows for a rapid recovery.

With bladeless LASIK, the surgeon uses a laser to create the corneal flap. This technology enables the surgeon to customize the corneal flap for every individual patient. In recent studies done by IntraLase, this technology may make it possible to treat those who were previously dismissed as non-candidates due to thin corneas.



MIKE KITTRELL/Associated Press  
**JAMESHA HARBIN**, of Eight Mile, Ala, held Oliciyanna at the University of South Alabama Children's and Women's Hospital in Mobile.

## Tiny triplet may soon head home

MOBILE, Ala. (AP) — A Mobile triplet who the University of South Alabama Children's and Women's Hospital says might be the world's smallest surviving baby could soon be headed home.

Oliviyanna Harbin-Page was born to 16-year-old Jamesha Harbin on Aug. 5 after 21 to 24 weeks of gestation. She weighed just 259 grams, or 9.1 ounces, at birth but the tiny triplet now weighs 3 pounds 2 ounces.

One of three girl triplets — the other two are identical, she is fraternal — Oliviyanna was smaller than her siblings, who already have graduated from their incubators and headed home with mom and dad.

Sisters Oriyanna was born at 1 pound 4 ounces, and Tavvanna was 1 pound 5 ounces.

Dr. Charles Hamm, professor of neonatal-prenatal medicine at the University of South Alabama College of Medicine, is part of the team caring for Oliviyanna and other at-risk newborns at USA's Hollis J. Wiseman Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

The medical team said Oliviyanna's homecoming could be in the next few weeks. "She has no specific risks for a bad outcome," Hamm said. "Like all premature babies, her health will be fragile for the next couple of years, and there is always some risk for long-term challenges."

Harbin, a LeFlore High

School student and athlete, recently recalled the dramatic moments leading up to her premature delivery by Cesarean section to the Press-Register.

First came the news from her doctor that she was expecting triplets. "My head filled with air," she told the Mobile newspaper.

She called the children's father, Robert Page Jr., who was at work. "Oh Lord," he said.

When Harbin phoned her mother, Katrina Harbin-Gamble, her mom said she "slid" under her desk at work, then prayed to God that "all would be OK with the babies."

She checked into the hospital in July after suffering from high blood pressure and Hamm said the girls were delivered at "the edge of viability."

Robert Lowry, spokesman for USA's College of Medicine, said that, to his knowledge, the former record holder was a little girl born in the Chicago area who was 260 grams — 1 gram more than Oliviyanna.

The newborn is gaining weight while in a section of the neonatal unit referred to as "the fat farm."

"She's a miracle," said Janice Gross, one of the registered nurses who monitors the progress of the babies.

Gross looked around at Oliviyanna's neighbors in the neonatal unit — each one getting stronger, breath by breath. "They're all miracles," she said.

## EMTs push for 'invisible bracelet'

LAURAN NEERGAARD  
AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. ambulance crews are pushing a virtual medical ID system to rapidly learn a patient's health history during a crisis — and which can immediately text-message loved ones that the person is headed for a hospital.

The Web-based registry, invisible-Bracelet.org, started in the state of Oklahoma and got a boost this fall when the state's government made the program an optional health benefit for its own employees.

Now the iBracelet attempts to go nationwide as the American Ambulance Association next month begins training its medics, who in turn will urge people in their communities to sign up.

For \$5 a year, basic health information and up to 10 emergency contacts are stored under a computer-assigned secret number that's kept on a wallet card with your driver's license, a key fob or a sticker on an insurance card.

It's a complement to the medical alert jewelry that people with diabetes, asthma and a host of other conditions have used for decades to signal their needs in an emergency.

And it comes as the American College of Emergency Physicians is trying to determine just what information is the most critical for medics and ER doctors to find when you're too ill or injured to answer questions, so that competing emergency-alert technologies don't miss any of the essentials.

"Too many times, we don't have the information to help us treat the patients correctly," says James Finger, president of the American Ambulance Association, the largest network of emergency medical service providers.

Not everyone who should wear a medical

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president, American Ambulance Association

alert bracelet does, costing emergency workers precious minutes determining, for example, if someone's incoherent because he's having a stroke or because he's diabetic with dangerously low blood sugar.

Even someone too healthy for those bracelets may have some condition that could help emergency workers make a faster diagnosis, avoid a medication reaction — or track down their next-of-kin faster.

The question is how to make sensitive medical data easily accessible to emergency workers without violating federal health-privacy laws.

Options range from simple bracelets to pricier key-chain flash drives, implanted microchips — and call-centers that relay stored health records and notify relatives when an alarm or medic's phone call activates the system.

Rapid family notification is crucial, says Stephen Williamson, president of Oklahoma's Emergency Medical Services Authority and one reason his emergency provider recently trained to use the new Invisible Bracelet.

A medical alarm necklace Williamson bought for his mother promptly called an ambulance when she fell, but didn't alert him as promised until 11 hours after he learned of her hospitalization on his own.

And when his wife suffered a brain aneurysm a year ago, Williamson called for help and got her in the ambulance" only to

freeze, unable to remember how to contact their daughters.

"I'm in the business of emergencies. ... But I just stared at my phone. I couldn't figure out for, honest to God, five minutes it seemed like, 'What do I do?'" Williamson recalls. "I'd much rather have known that's being handled and left for the hospital."

Enter the iBracelet. Only authorized medics can access a Web site that reads the PIN and opens the health info they use to treat. Then, with a push of a button, the medic chooses an area hospital for transport. Simultaneously, the up to 10 people listed to be notified by text or e-mail get that message.

Emergency service providers couldn't show data yet on how well it works.

But nearly 100,000 people have enrolled since the service opened in Oklahoma in April, says Noah Roberts of the Tulsa-based Docvia health software company, and the University of Oklahoma is preparing to use it for a campus registry.

The ultimate goal is an electronic medical record for everyone, available no matter where they are, says Dr. Andrew I. Bern, an ACEP board member and emergency physician in south Florida.

That's years away. Until then, ACEP is preparing recommendations for the most important information to overcome what Bern calls "the limited real estate" on emergency bracelets and wallet cards, and the problem of outdated information when people forget to update their records.

No one's immune: 120 million people needed emergency care last year, Bern notes. So in choosing whichever of today's emergency-information systems most fits your lifestyle, he stresses to keep it up to date.

"You have to be a partner in this whole process, gathering the information," he says. "If it's not current, it's not that useful."

## Stocking stuffers for health, fitness buffs

By MARJIE GILLIAM  
Cox Newspapers

DAYTON, Ohio — Health and fitness products make ideal holiday gifts. Some last-minute stocking stuffers and other budget-friendly gift ideas include:

**Exercise DVD's, books and videos** — Available for nearly every type of workout and health and fitness topic, and ideal for those just starting out or who want to exercise in the privacy and comfort of their own home. Popular this year are dance, strength training, nutrition and aerobic instructional products.

**Pedometer** — Wearing a pedometer keeps track of how many steps you've taken throughout the day. Experts recommend being active enough to take about 10,000 steps (approximately five miles) most days of the week for healthy adults, more steps if weight loss is desired.

The elderly or those unaccustomed to exercise should consult with a physician as to appropriate number of steps.

**Wrist weights** — Easy to incorporate into any fitness routine, wrist weights add extra intensity by slightly increasing the amount of resistance being used. Typically ranging from 1 to 5 pounds, wrist weights are de-

signed to slip right over the hand or use Velcro to ensure a more precise fit.

**Resistance bands** — Can be utilized in any type of workout and a great gift for anyone who travels frequently or who doesn't have the space for exercise equipment. Lightweight and portable, resistance bands come in different color-coded strengths and are a convenient way to condition, strengthen and tone.

**Workout gloves** — Using exercise equipment can take its toll on the hands over time. Workout gloves provide protection, cushioning and can aid in maintaining a safe grip when using equipment.

## No milk and cookies for Santa, health officials say

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Health officials say it's time to think outside the toy box when it comes to treating stressed out and overweight Santa.

Health officials also are advising swine flu shots and hand sanitizers for Santas, and other folks too.

It's a reminder that flu season is still active, and will be into the new year.

Dr. Terry Mason with Cook

County's Health and Hospitals System says with the new year approaching, it's time for other folks, to shape up, too.

His list includes a gym membership, or gift certificate for a back massage.

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*Your*  
**HEALTH TIP**

By Rob Kasisky, R.P.H.

**Eaglescripts**  
APOTHECARY

**Dear Friends,**  
*May you and your family experience the love, joy and peace of this blessed season. We at Eaglescripts Pharmacy thank you for your patronage. We wish you good health and prosperity in the coming year.*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

**We will be closed Fri. Dec. 25th and Sat., Dec. 26th.**  
**We will re-open Mon., Dec. 28**

**401 North 4th St., Indiana (Beside The Dairy Queen)**  
**Phone 724-349-9170**  
**Toll Free 1-888-463-9170**

## BRIEFS

■ **Active Parenting of Teens**, Center for Family Life, 125 N. Fifth St., Indiana (724) 463-8595.

■ **Beginning Yoga**, 7 p.m. Mondays at IRMC, (724) 357-8088.

■ **Clear the Air** is a one-session program that can give you the tools you need to get prepared, take action, stay motivated and quit smoking for good. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-8088.

■ **CPR Classes** teach adult CPR with automated external defibrillator instructions through the American Red Cross.

For more information, call the Indiana chapter at (724) 465-5678.

■ **Disaster Health Services Orientation** teaches how to organize and administer DHS functions of the chapter level and how to initiate a larger operation through American Red Cross. For more information, call the Indiana chapter at (724) 465-5678.

■ **Eat Well for Life** is a four-week lifestyle improvement program promoting wellness and long-term weight management through balanced nutrition, cooking demonstrations and other hands-on experiences. For more information, call Excelsa Health at (877) 771-1234.

■ **Heartsaver/AED** is a program that teaches adult, infant and child CPR, AED use and what to do if someone is choking. The program is \$35 through IRMC.

For more information, call (724) 357-8088.

■ **Infant/Child CPR** is a four-hour workshop through IRMC that concentrates on learning what to do for an infant or child who is choking or has a respiratory or cardiac arrest.

For more information, call (724) 357-7075.

■ **Intro to Reflexology** is offered through Excelsa Health. For more information, call (877) 771-1234.

■ **Let's Talk Parents!** (Infants and Toddlers) is a class facilitated by Kathy Moore, executive director at the Center for Family Life. Learn how to tame temper tantrums, boost your child's self-esteem and discuss the developmental stages your baby or toddler is going through.

Cost is \$5, and registration is required. For more information, call IRMC at (724) 357-7075.

■ **Managing Your Diabetes**, IRMC, (724) 357-8088.

■ **Ready to Quit Smoking Cessation Course** is a seven-week program for those who have resolved to quit smoking.

The class is \$25, and scholarships are available for pregnant women. Some costs may be covered by insurance. For more information, call Excelsa Health at (877) 771-1234.

**Home Health Answers**

Presented by  
**Linda Bettinazzi**  
President/CEO

**HOME HEALTH CARE COVERAGE**

Medicare and other insurances may cover skilled home healthcare services. To be eligible, you must meet certain conditions. A doctor must decide that you need skilled care in your home and prescribe it. You must need part-time or intermittent skilled nursing care, physical therapy, or speech-language services. Also, you must be homebound. This means that you are normally unable to leave home without considerable and taxing effort, and when you do leave home, you require the assistance of another person or "assistive" device. Services must be provided from a home health agency that is "certified" or approved by Medicare. Medicare may cover therapy, medical social services, and certain medical supplies and durable medical equipment.

VNA is a Medicare certified agency that has served Indiana County for 39 years. To learn more about what we can do to help you, please call (724) 463-6340. We are located in the Medical Arts Building at 850 Hospital Road, and we are affiliated with the Indiana Regional Medical Center.

*Compassionate care right at home.*

**VNA** Visiting Nurse Association of INDIANA COUNTY  
Compassionate Care Right At Home  
[www.vnaindianacounty.com](http://www.vnaindianacounty.com)