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# Powerful laser provides new options for vision patients

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**SAN FRANCISCO (KGO) -- A powerful, cutting edge laser is providing new options for vision patients who are not candidates for the popular Lasik treatment. Doctors say it can provide similar results, but without the long recovery times required in the past.**

On several flights, 29-year-old paraglider Suellen Lustoza has had her vision interrupted just when she's needed it the most.

"Sometimes when paragliding I had my contact lenses coming out while I was flying, which is not a great feeling," Lustoza said.

She's hoping to make those contacts obsolete with the help of San Francisco ophthalmologist Doctor Ella Faktorovich with the Pacific Vision Institute.



Lustoza's condition is slightly complicated by irregularities on the surface of her cornea, which ruled her out as a candidate for the popular Lasik treatment. The alternative, known as PRK, produces similar results, but often with a much longer recovery time.

"I could not afford just to not work, and as well not to fly, because this is my passion for 2-3 months," Lustoza said.

To cut that recovery time, Dr. Faktorovich will perform the PRK procedure with a newly approved laser known as the EX500. She says it's currently the world's fastest excimer laser for reshaping the eye.

"The laser beam itself, the configuration, is very precise," Dr. Faktorovich said. "And it's a special cylindrical type, tiny laser beam."

In a procedure that will last just minutes, Dr. Faktorovich guides the specially designed cone shape laser beam onto Lustoza's eye.

As seen in an animation provided by the company, the laser pulses are delivered across the entire cornea, including the periphery. Dr. Faktorovich says the more even distribution avoids a flattening of the cornea that can cause side effects sometimes associated with laser eye surgery.

"And the brain would perceive images seen through that different shaped cornea with glare and halos that were the traditional problem," Dr. Faktorovich said.

Besides avoiding halos and nighttime glare, she says the more precise shaping also shortens the healing process. For some patients, cutting weeks off the typical recovery time of a month or longer to experience fully corrected vision.



Dr. Ella Faktorovich

"With this laser, patients get 20/20 or better vision at one week after surgery," Dr. Faktorovich said.

For Lustoza, the prospect of getting back into the air with the safety of 20/20 vision is simply uplifting.

"When you're flying you actually want to have a great view and a great perspective, and a see well where you're going to land so you keep yourself safe" Lustoza said.

Dr. Faktorovich says the price for the PRK treatment is comparable to Lasik.

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