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*"The Complete
Optical Laboratory"*



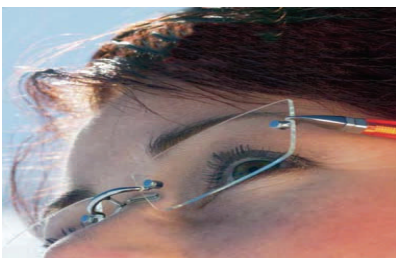
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How to Recommend the Right Lens Material for your Patient

If you were an optician in the 60's, you remember that choosing a lens material for your patient was pretty simple. You almost always recommended a lens made of Crown glass. On occasion, you might use a high density flint glass (remember those?) that has a high index of refraction, and weighed about 4 pounds! Today there are a wide variety of plastic lens materials on the market, and a few glass choices as well, with specific features, benefits and applications. The questions is: which one is the right one for any given patient and how do you decide which one to use?

Getting Started

Before you ask the patient any questions, gather some objective preliminary information by looking at the patients RX. What power is used in each eye? In many cases, it will fall between +/-3.00D. In a study conducted by one of our lens manufacturer's this year, it was discovered that **85%** of all prescriptions fall into this category. It was also noted that **92%** of all prescriptions fall between +/-4.00D while **95%** fall between +/-5.00D. At the power range +/-6.00D, you will have covered **97%** of all Rx's. The scripts that fall above this range constitute only **3%** of ALL Rx's dispensed!



What is this RX data telling you? As you analyze this information above, you begin to realize that you can start forming an idea of which lens material might be suitable for the patient based on his/her RX. This is the first piece of the puzzle. Practicing opticianry means using your judgement. Mak-

ing a lens material choice is one of the most important decisions you will make for any eyewear patient. Its selection should be done with careful consideration of many factors. If one lens material is really the best choice for all patients, then a machine can do lens selection since your personal analysis and interpretation is not needed.

Subjectively Speaking

Once you have reviewed the prescription and considered its power in regard to material choice, the rest of your information will come from "subjective questioning". Careful questioning is the key to discovering a patient's lifestyle. Once you understand the demands he/she feels are important for their vision and eyewear, you can match the features and benefits of the proper lens material to your patient.

Choosing a lens material for a patient is without a doubt, one of the most important recommendations an eyecare professional (ECP) makes during the eyewear selection process.

Today's ECP can choose from plastic lens materials in 11 indices ranging from 1.50 to 1.74 and in five indices from 1.52 to 1.90 in glass.

A professional approach by constructing your questions carefully so they unearth the appropriate information is crucial. The questioning needs not only to discover the patient's eye use information but his wants and needs as well. We also need to determine the degree to which each issues he/she raises, for that will influence the decision on the lens material choice.

For example, if a patient indicates that she would really like to have fashionable lenses with a flash mirror treatment, ultra-thin lenses, and a high degree of impact resistance, which one of these is the most important factor in the lens material choice? Which is the second most important? And the third? Sure you could offer this patient a 1.74 plastic lens material-the highest plastic material on the market, but is this the

correct approach? Is the thinnest lens the most important aspect of her eyewear while the other factors are addressed in some way? Perhaps impact resistancy should take priority since it will help protect the wearers eye better than a less impact resistant material. Decisions like this are all part of the lens material selection.

Many of today's new lens designs are only available as specific materials. This is clearly a limiting factor and one that you need to consider as you prepare to recommend a lens material to a patient. Of course, the way to avoid this problem is to be up-to-date on product availability and



Brian from Advanced Eye Centers in Dartmouth, MA with a delighted patient.

have this information readily available.

With strong product knowledge and by asking the right questions you will be able to recommend the right lens material for your patients' every eyewear need.

Making the right lens material recommendation is a very rewarding part of the ophthalmic practice, so we strongly urge you to keep up with new lens designs and materials. Its challenging...but interesting, and fun!

Next Issue: Are you recommending Premium Non-Glare to your patients?

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