For most of her life, Jessica Page woke up to a blurry world. The first order of the day was always reaching for her glasses. “I’m super-blind, and I’ve needed glasses or contacts since I was eight,” she explains. “I was always reaching in the morning, trying to find my glasses and trying to find the alarm clock.”

Because Jessica had severe myopia, or nearsightedness, she couldn’t see anything clearly beyond a few inches without wearing glasses or contacts. But even though she relied on them, glasses and contacts often got in her way.

“I’m very active and go to the beach or on the boat while wearing contacts, with the dirt flying around, and the sand and the water – it’s just a real pain,” describes Jessica, who is 35.

Often placed in front of a computer, Jessica is an IT specialist. Heavy computer use can contribute to dry eyes, and she reached a point where contacts became uncomfortable.

“My eyes would get so, so dry,” she recalls. She switched to glasses to avoid the discomfort her contacts were causing. The change helped at work, but was less than ideal for the off-hour hobbies she loved, like horseback riding.

“Having to wear glasses when horseback riding is one of the most miserable things possible,” states Jessica. “It can get sweaty, and you’re constantly pushing your glasses back up on your face.”

She dreamed of glasses-free vision but decided not to pursue LASIK, the most well known refractive eye surgery. LASIK is performed with a laser to physically alter the cornea, the front “window” of the eye, to change how the eye focuses. It is used to treat nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism.

“I’d been looking into vision correction for years, but I was never very comfortable with the idea of LASIK surgery,” confides Jessica.

“LASIK is a great option for some people, but I was worried about having dry eyes afterward since I’m on the computer all the time,” she continues. “It’s also a permanent procedure that reshapes your corneas, and I didn’t want that.”

In her research, Jessica discovered an alternative to LASIK that could give her clear, sharp vision without the need for any permanent physical changes to her corneas. She opted for implantable contact lenses, or ICLs.

“Once I learned about ICLs, I knew that was the best choice for me,” she affirms.

Jessica turned to board-certified, fellowship-trained, ophthalmologist Jason K. Darlington, MD, at The Eye Institute for Medicine & Surgery for the ICL procedure.

Implantable contact lenses: A vision correction alternative to LASIK.

Implantable contact lenses can be used for patients who are LASIK candidates but don’t want their eyes altered by corneal refractive surgery because of the possibility of developing a large amount of dry eye,” he continues. “Some patients don’t like the idea of having their cornea changed. They’d rather have a lens implanted that can be taken out, instead of making a permanent change to their eye.”

Dr. Darlington notes that for people who are very nearsighted, ICLs may have an additional advantage. Glare at night, such as from oncoming cars when driving, or seeing halos around lights can occur for people with severe nearsightedness while wearing glasses or, in some cases, contacts.

“That glare and the halo effect tend to be minimized with the ICL treatment,” the surgeon adds. “ICLs can be an excellent treatment for nearsightedness.”

Better than 20/20

Jessica reports that the ICL procedure was easy and highly effective.

“Dr. Darlington was fantastic,” reports Jessica. “The Eye Institute’s outpatient surgery center was so great. They made me feel very comfortable.

“The surgery itself was a quick in-and-out and a pretty easy recovery,” she emphasizes. “I could see without glasses when I came out of surgery.”

As her eyes healed, her vision became even sharper, and is now better than 20/20.

“ICLs gave me a much better chance for excellent results. I’ve got awesome vision that I’ll have for years and years without any maintenance. It’s basically like putting in a contact lens once and I’m done,” enthuses Jessica.

“It’s crazy to be able to wake up in the morning and see right away. It’s the most amazing thing ever,” she confirms. “This is how the rest of the world gets to live all the time, and I’m so thankful that I get to experience it, too.

“I’d tell people to do the research and talk to a doctor to find out if ICLs are right for them,” continues Jessica. “Because it definitely does offer advantages. LASIK is a great procedure in itself, but this is the Cadillac of vision. I’m pretty excited about it!”

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Darlington for an ICL or refractive surgery consultation at The Eye Institute for Medicine & Surgery, please call (321) 722-4443 or visit www.SeeBetterBrevard.com. Appointments are available in his Rockledge, Melbourne and Palm Bay offices.