



Lindsay's eye-opening miracle A WELCOME SIGHT

HOW A STENT
IMPLANT
CHANGED
HER LIFE

At just 6mm long – about the same size as an eyelash – the minimally invasive glaucoma surgery iStent is tiny. But what this device lacks in size it more than makes up for in effectiveness, according to Kerikeri's Lindsay Scott. The grandmother-of-five believes her glaucoma is now under control and says her life is drastically different since undergoing the new surgery. Lindsay was born with vision issues after forceps damaged her right eye at birth, plus her family has long suffered with the debilitating disease, which slowly destroys the optic nerve at the back of the eye. Lindsay's

father suffered from glaucoma for many years, while her uncle went blind. After undergoing regular check-ups for years, opticians picked up "odd readings" in 2017 and Lindsay was referred to a specialist who detected the condition. "I had noticed for some time when tramping or running that I wasn't gauging my steps properly," she explains. "I had experienced the odd bad fall, which I just put down to being clumsy. When I was told I had glaucoma it all made sense." To stop the fluid pressure inside her eyes from increasing, Lindsay (68) was advised to take a course of drops. But far from improving the symptoms, her

vision problems worsened. "I was put on a regime where I had to put a chart together regarding the timing of the drops, and every time I put the drops in it felt like burning acid in my eyes," tells the part-time small business researcher. "I also started to suffer from lid inflammation and each morning I didn't have the power to open my eyes. It was scary. I struggled to carry out work on a computer and I could no longer exercise safely, it was quite depressing. Taking the drops definitely downgraded the quality of my life." Told to take the initial course of action for six months, it was after just six weeks that a deeply distressed Lindsay returned to

her GP and sought a second opinion. She was put in touch with Auckland ophthalmologist Dr Dean Corbett, who could see the drops weren't working. Lindsay ended up undergoing lens replacement surgery in both eyes and, at Dean's recommendation, had the delicate iStent implanted in her left at the same time, to drain it of any secretion build-up. "I was pretty desperate by then; I needed a solution," says Lindsay, who couldn't have the stent put in her right eye because of irreparable damage. "I knew if I didn't have the stent fitted I would have to take the drops, which I no longer wanted to do." Thanks to the surgery, which

was nearly two years ago now, her life has been transformed. "As soon as the stent was fitted, I could see everything I needed to without a daily regime of eye drops," tells Lindsay, who is also a breast cancer survivor. "I can read my computer, I can tramp, run and garden. In fact, I think I can see much better than when I was young!" "I no longer need to wear glasses; just sunglasses, which I wear religiously to protect my vision asset. I'm now a fully functioning sighted person, which is fantastic." Given glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness in New Zealand, and with only half of people aware

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All clear! Lindsay's quality of life has improved out of sight since the surgery.



they even have the disease, Lindsay is a champion of getting regular check-ups. And she also has some thoughts for those who may be considering the life-changing eye operation. "[In my opinion] the surgery is effective with minimal risk to the patient and removes the burden of eye drops, including their side effects," she says. "For me, it would be totally intolerable to have gone on taking the drops and having all that discomfort and soreness. "But now I know I can complete a work contract and my eyes won't give up on me halfway through. I'd say to all others in my position, definitely go for stent surgery."

Steve Landells

PHOTOS: RENEE LANDOWNE • MAKE-UP: MONIQUE LIVELY