

Vision of Graves' eye disease patient restored after switch to low-carb, gluten-free diet

July 10 2014, by Jim Ritter

Don Parker was facing a second surgery to treat the bulging eyes and double vision he was experiencing due to Graves' eye disease. But then ophthalmologist James McDonnell, MD, of Loyola University Medical Center, recommended an alternative therapy that did not involve surgery or medication.

McDonnell told Parker to change his diet, lose weight and take a nutraceutical (natural food product) that's designed to restore proper immune and digestive function.

Parker followed McDonnell's regimen. He lost more than 35 pounds by giving up soda pop and eating a low-carb, gluten-free diet with lots of vegetables. Each day, he takes 12 capsules of the nutraceutical.

"My double vision is almost gone and there is so little bulging in my eyes that they look almost completely normal," he said.

Graves' [eye disease](#), also known as Graves' ophthalmopathy, is present in about half of people who have Graves' disease, an autoimmune disorder. In Graves' [eye](#) disease, the immune system attacks muscles and other tissues around the eye. This can cause the eyes to bulge out and become misaligned.

Bulging eyes can be treated with orbital decompression surgery. The surgeon removes bone and/or fat from behind the eye, allowing the eye to move back into its socket. Double vision can be treated with a

different surgery, which straightens the eyes by adjusting the eye muscles.

When Parker came to see McDonnell, he already had undergone one orbital decompression and was facing a possible second surgery for his [double vision](#). But rather than recommending [surgery](#), McDonnell suggested a holistic approach.

"Once you clear up and balance your body, a whole raft of problems can go away," McDonnell said.

Parker said his doctor appointment with McDonnell served as a wake-up call. "I was at a crossroads in my life," Parker said. "I would have to either change my ways or die. Dr. McDonnell helped me get back on track."

Provided by Loyola University Health System

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