

LASIK Surgery - Is LASIK For You?

What is LASIK?

LASIK (Laser Assisted In Situ Keratomileusis) is an outpatient surgical procedure that treats myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness) and astigmatism. LASIK uses an Excimer Laser to reshape the cornea in order to improve the way the eye focuses light rays on the retina.

LASIK may decrease your dependence on glasses and contact lenses, or in some cases may allow you to do without them entirely. Most patients are corrected to 20/40 vision and many patients are corrected to 20/20 or better.

Am I a Good Candidate?

People who want to minimize their dependence on glasses or contact lenses make good candidates for LASIK. Lifestyle, hobbies, and amount of correction needed are all factors that may determine if you are a good candidate.

The ideal candidate is:

- Over 21 years old
- Not pregnant
- Free of any eye disease
- Has not had a significant change in prescription over the past year
- Has a refractive error within the range of correction for LASIK
- Willing to accept the potential risks, complications and side effects

How is LASIK done?

LASIK is performed in a reclining chair in an outpatient surgical suite. First, the eye is numbed with an anesthetic eyedrop and the eyelids are cleaned with an antiseptic solution. A sterile drape is used to hold the eyelashes out of the way. Then an eye holder is placed between the eyelids to keep them open and prevent you from blinking. A microkeratome is placed on the eye and its suction ring will generate a vacuum force to hold the eye in position. You may feel pressure at this time and will notice that your vision goes dim or even black. You will hear a buzzing sound as the microkeratome glides across the cornea to create a hinged flap of paper-thin corneal tissue. The microkeratome is removed from the eye and the flap is lifted and folded back. The laser, which has been pre-programmed to your prescription, is centered above your eye and precisely sculpts the exposed corneal tissue. A whirring and clicking

sound can be heard during the procedure. After the laser finishes reshaping the cornea, the flap is smoothed back into position.

What happens before surgery?

A thorough examination is performed to measure your prescription and check for any abnormalities that might affect the procedure. Corneal thickness is measured to ensure that there is adequate corneal tissue with which to work. The corneal curvature is then evaluated to ensure that there are no corneal irregularities or diseases that would prevent laser treatment.

What happens after surgery?

The eyes are protected with dark sunglasses or a see-through shield for the first day and night. It is normal to experience burning, tearing and a scratchy feeling for the first several hours following surgery. Plan on going home and taking a nap after your surgery – this helps to initiate the healing process and will minimize any burning or tearing. You will use eyedrops to help with healing and alleviate dryness.

What will my vision be like after surgery?

It is important that anyone considering LASIK have realistic expectations. LASIK will allow you to perform most of your everyday tasks without corrective lenses. However, those looking for perfect vision without glasses or contact lenses run the risk of being disappointed.

The majority of people who have LASIK surgery achieve vision between 20/20 and 20/40 without glasses or contact lenses. If vision is undercorrected or overcorrected after the procedure, it may be possible to perform a second surgery, called an enhancement, to further refine the results.

If 20/20 vision is essential for your career or leisure activities, consider whether 20/40 vision would be good enough for you. You should be comfortable with the idea that you may need a second surgery, or may need to use glasses for certain things, such as reading or driving at night.

LASIK cannot correct presbyopia, the age-related loss of close-up focusing power. With or without refractive surgery, almost everyone who has excellent distance vision will need reading glasses by the time they get to be 40 or 50. Some people choose to be corrected to monovision, which leaves or creates, some nearsightedness in one eye to help with close work. Monovision can provide more visual flexibility, allowing near and distance vision. It is however, a compromise that does sacrifice some quality of distance vision.

Risks, Complications & Side Effects

LASIK, like any surgery, has risks and potential complications that should be carefully considered. LASIK can sometimes result in undercorrection or overcorrection. Fortunately, these problems can often be improved with glasses, contact lenses or additional laser surgery.

Most complications can be treated without any loss of vision. Permanent vision loss is rare. There is a chance, though extremely small, that your vision will not be as good after surgery as before – even with glasses or contact lenses. This is called “loss of best-corrected vision.”

Some people experience temporary side effects after LASIK. These included: discomfort or pain; hazy or blurry vision; scratchiness, dryness, glare, halos or starbursts around lights; light sensitivity and/or small pink or red patches on the white of the eye.

Almost everyone experiences some dryness in the eyes and fluctuating vision during the day. These symptoms usually faded within one month, although some people will continue to have symptoms for a longer period of time.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LASIK PLEASE CALL FOR YOUR FREE CONSULTATION

