

Common Questions About Laser Vision Correction Surgery

What Is Laser Vision Correction Surgery?

Laser vision correction surgery is done to correct vision problems, such as:

- nearsightedness. You can see clearly close up, but it is blurry in the distance.
- farsightedness. You can see clearly in the distance, but it is blurry close up.
- astigmatism. You have focus problems caused by the cornea.
- mixed astigmatism. You have nearsightedness and farsightedness.

This type of surgery is often called LASIK (laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis) surgery.

There are two other types of laser vision correction surgery:

- LASEK (laser-assisted sub-epithelial keratomileusis)
- PRK (photorefractive keratectomy).

What is the Difference Between LASIK, LASEK and PRK?

LASIK

This surgery is done on the surface of the eye. A laser first creates a flap of corneal tissue. The flap is folded back to expose the inner area of the cornea. The excimer laser is used to remove very thin layers of tissue. The flap is put back into place on the front surface of the eye.

LASEK

During this surgery, no corneal flap is created. The surface of the eye is brushed to the side to expose the inner layer of the cornea. The excimer laser is used to remove very thin layers of tissue. The surface of the eye is put back into place. There are also no flap complications (problems) since one was not created.

PRK

This surgery is done on the surface of the eye. No corneal flap is created. The excimer laser is used to remove very thin layers of tissue. PRK may be a good choice for you if you have:

- larger pupils
- thin corneas
- dry eyes
- other corneal issues (such as scar tissue and dry eyes)
- long-term concerns about LASIK corneal flaps.

Can I Have Laser Vision Correction Surgery?

You may be able to have laser vision correction surgery if you:

- are 21 years or older
- wear glasses or contact lenses to correct nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, or mixed astigmatism.

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Before having laser vision correction surgery, you will need to have a consultation with an eye surgeon. During the consultation, he or she will:

- tell you if you are able to have laser vision correction surgery
- talk about the surgery
- answer your questions.

After the consultation, you can decide if laser vision correction surgery is something you would like to do.

If your eye surgeon decides you are not able to have laser vision correction surgery at this time, you may be able to have it in the future as new technology becomes available.

Will I Need Glasses or Contact Lenses After Laser Vision Correction Surgery?

Most people who have laser vision correction surgery don't need to wear glasses or contact lenses after surgery. If you wear bifocals, you may still need to use reading glasses after the surgery. Each person will have different results. If you have any questions, please talk with your eye surgeon.

Is Laser Vision Correction Surgery Painful?

There is usually no pain during surgery. You may have some discomfort or irritation for a few hours after the surgery. Your eye surgeon will give you information on how to reduce any discomfort.

What Are the Risks of Laser Vision Correction Surgery?

As with all surgeries, there are risks of complications (problems). Before the surgery, your eye surgeon will talk with you about these complications and answer any questions you may have.

How Much Does Laser Vision Correction Surgery Cost?

The cost of your surgery will depend on which procedure you and your eye surgeon decide is best for you. Your eye surgeon's office will provide information about cost.

What is Bladeless LASIK Surgery?

During bladeless LASIK surgery, the eye surgeon uses a computer to control the laser that creates the corneal flap. This helps him or her create a flap of even thickness. Bladeless LASIK surgery may allow those who have thin corneas to have vision correction surgery.

What is Monovision?

Monovision is a type of treatment for presbyopia. Presbyopia is a common vision problem that happens as you age. It affects your ability to focus on close objects. Many people have monovision correction with their contact lenses or glasses.

Monovision will correct one eye for seeing clearly in the distance and one eye for focusing on close objects. This is helpful for near tasks such as scanning a menu or article. It is not helpful for reading fine print or for reading for long periods of time.

If you are active (such as playing golf or tennis) or drive a lot at night, monovision may not be right for you.

When you have laser vision correction surgery, you and your eye surgeon may decide to leave one eye slightly nearsighted. During your consultation, you and your eye surgeon will decide which choice is right for you.