



How to Prepare for Laser-Assisted in situ Keratomileusis (LASIK) Surgery



A patient guide to prepare for laser refractive surgery

To experience clear vision, bent light rays must fall properly on the retina that sends impulses through the optic nerve to the brain.¹ If the eye's shape or cornea is abnormal, the light rays will not fall properly on the retina and will cause blurry vision.² This type of visual impairment is called a refractive error, a common eye disorder that occurs when the eye cannot clearly focus on images.² Surgical procedures that aim to improve the focusing power of the eye are called refractive surgery.² There are two types of laser vision correction procedures: LASIK and PRK (photorefractive keratectomy).³ The main difference between LASIK and PRK is that with LASIK surgery, a laser to correct vision under a corneal flap, requiring a blade or laser to cut into the cornea to create a flap.³ With PRK, surgeons remove only the epithelium (outer layer of the cornea) and use a laser to correct vision on the surface of the cornea.³ Essentially, all laser vision corrections follow the same procedure.⁴

LASIK surgery is a refractive surgery that uses a precise and controlled removal of corneal tissue by a special laser to reshape the cornea to change its focusing power, making the eye a more ideal shape for focusing light.⁴ LASIK surgery corrects refractive errors such as myopia, hyperopia and astigmatism.⁴ More than 17 million people worldwide have had some form of laser vision correction.⁴

Are you a candidate for LASIK surgery?

Laser vision correction is a proven procedure that provides life-changing results to millions of people; however, it may not be the best solution for every patient. Always talk to your eye care professional (ECP) to understand your options and if you are a candidate for any procedure, including LASIK.

- **Make sure your vision prescription has been stable for at least one year** – if your vision is still changing you may want to wait to have the procedure⁴



Nearsighted Vision



Farsighted Vision



Astigmatism

What to ask your LASIK surgeon

- Below are some suggested questions to review with your ECP when considering LASIK surgery. You may have additional questions as your conversation progresses.⁵
- How long have you been performing LASIK procedures?⁵
- What results can someone with my vision problem realistically expect from LASIK?⁵
- What percentage of your patients achieve 20/40 results or better?^{*5}
- What percentage of your patients achieve 20/20 or better?^{**5}
- What percentage of your patients achieve 20/20 or better without glasses or contact lenses?⁷
- How many patients report unresolved complications six months after surgery?⁵
- If enhancement surgery is required, what will you charge?⁵
- Does my occupation, sports participation, or hobbies affect my candidacy?⁵
- Does my medical history have any bearing on my candidacy?⁵
- How often and when will you perform post-operative exams?⁵
- Does it matter if I am about to become pregnant?
- Does it matter if I am still growing?

- **Review your medical history** and any medications you may be taking with your ECP as they may affect surgery⁴

Before LASIK Surgery

Once you and your ECP have determined that you are a good candidate for LASIK surgery, you will receive instructions on how to prepare for the procedure.⁵

Some instructions may include the following:

- Discontinue wearing contact lenses.⁶ Consult with your ECP on specific instructions on discontinued use.⁶
- Keep your eyes free of debris and avoid using creams, makeup or perfumes at least a day in advance of the procedure⁶
- Wash the area surrounding the eyes daily with a mild cleanser like baby shampoo for a few days prior to the procedure⁷
- Make arrangements for a ride to and from the hospital or surgery center⁶

During LASIK Surgery

LASIK surgery only takes a few minutes – it's a simple, quick and virtually painless procedure.⁶ You will sit in a reclining chair in the exam room containing the laser system.⁷ The laser system is a large machine with an attached microscope and computer screen.⁷

Each surgeon's procedure may differ slightly, but in general you can expect the following during LASIK surgery:

- Before surgery, the surgeon will administer similar tests used to prescribe spectacles or contacts.⁷ This information will show the surgeon how to reshape the cornea to correct vision and where to direct the laser beam during surgery.⁷ LASIK eye surgery using newer wavefront-guided technology uses a scanner to create a detailed map of the eye to allow for increased accuracy in removing corneal tissue.⁷
- LASIK surgery does not require general anesthesia – instead, you will receive a series of anesthetic drops in each eye to numb the eye and ensure a virtually painless procedure.⁶ You may feel light pressure after the numbing drops have been applied.⁸
- Once the anesthetic drops have been administered and your eyes are numb, you will be asked to lie down on a table under the laser equipment.⁸
- During the surgery, you will focus on a point of light above you.⁷ Staring at this light helps keep the eye

* 20/40 indicates 'subnormal vision' or which a person with subnormal vision can see an object 20 feet that a person with normal vision can see at 40 feet away.

**20/20 indicates 'normal vision' or which a person with normal vision can see an object 20 feet away.

- fixed while the laser reshapes the cornea.⁷
- The surgeon will begin by pulling back a thin flap of tissue from the cornea, exposing the underlying tissue so it can be easily reshaped.⁷
- Next, the surgeon will apply small, rapid bursts of laser energy to carefully reshape the cornea, making the eye a more ideal shape for focusing light.⁸
- Once the eyes have been reshaped - which normally takes less than a minute - the surgeon will lay the corneal flap back into place, where it acts like a natural bandage.⁸ No stitches are needed.⁷

After LASIK Surgery

Although the results may vary, some patients notice dramatically better vision immediately after LASIK surgery.⁸ Complete recovery takes time – weeks and even months – and you are responsible for your post-surgery care.⁸ Always ask your surgeon for more details and follow their post-operative instructions.⁸ Below are a few things most people experience following LASIK surgery.

Immediately after LASIK surgery

- Once your surgeon confirms that everything is in order, you can go home – typically just an hour or two after arriving.⁸ You will not be able to drive yourself home, so plan on arranging a ride.⁶
- Bring dark sunglasses to block the glare of bright sunshine outside in case your surgeon has not already mentioned that he or she will provide a pair for you.⁸
- Schedule a follow-up appointment within one to two days post-surgery to monitor healing.⁷
- Fill any prescriptions from your surgeon before returning home.⁸

During the healing process, your surgeon may ask that you:

- Use prescription eye drops to prevent infection and reduce any swelling or irritation.⁸
- Use an over-the-counter lubricant eye drop to keep your eyes moist and comfortable.⁸
- Wear eye shields, particularly during sleep, to prevent irritation.⁸

- Wear dark sunglasses if you experience sensitivity to bright lights.⁸
- Avoid rubbing your eyes for a few weeks after surgery.⁸

After the first week post-operative

- You should be able to return to normal activities quickly depending on how you feel and on surgeon's instructions.⁸
- Most surgeons recommend recurring evaluations for the first six months after surgery.⁶
- Wait one to three days before participating in any non-contact sports and one to two months before engaging in strenuous contact or water sports.⁸
- Gently wash around the eyes with a mild cleanser.⁸
- You may experience fluctuations in vision for up to six months after surgery.⁷

Potential side effects for LASIK surgery

- Some side effects to LASIK may be watery eyes, a burning or scratchy sensation or mild discomfort.⁸ These symptoms usually subside within the first few days following surgery.⁸
- Other risks include reduced vision in low light, overcorrection, undercorrection, induced astigmatism, glare or halos around lights and double vision.⁷ These risks may affect the visual acuity, particularly at night.⁷
- Some patients experience a sensation of dryness.⁷ Your ECP may recommend lubricating drops.⁷
- While many people see clearly after the first week, in some cases, vision may still seem slightly hazy or blurry.⁸ You may have trouble seeing in low light and may be sensitive to bright light or see halos. Everyone responds differently, but typically these symptoms diminish within weeks, if not days, as the eye heals.⁸ If you experience severe pain, or if vision worsens, contact your surgeon immediately.⁸

As with any surgical procedure, LASIK surgery carries risks. Please consult with an eye care professional for more information and to find out if LASIK surgery is right for you.

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