



Live Well, Work Well

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LASIK

Lasik is a type of eye surgery that was developed to improve vision and reduce dependency on glasses or contact lenses.

Lasik (short for Laser-assisted in situ Keratomileusis) uses either a blade or laser to cut a flap in the cornea. A hinge is left at one end of this flap. The flap is folded back to reveal the stroma, the middle section of the cornea. Pulses from a computer-controlled laser vaporize a portion of the stroma and the flap is then replaced.

Along with conventional Lasik, more advanced procedures exist. These procedures, called custom or wavefront Lasik, use a special laser to develop a three-dimensional image of your eye in order to treat more subtle distortions to vision.

Lasik procedures can correct three types of vision problems: myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness) and astigmatism (blurred vision). Lasik cannot correct presbyopia, which is a difficulty with nearsightedness that comes with aging.

While successful Lasik operations can greatly increase vision, patients may still need to wear corrective lenses to perform certain tasks. Also, vision can still deteriorate after surgery, so patients may need to wear glasses for close work and reading even if they didn't need them before surgery.

Risks Associated with Lasik

First introduced commercially in the United States in the 1990s, Lasik has a high success rate, with a highly-touted study finding that 96 percent of Lasik patients achieve 20/20 vision following the procedure. However, like all surgeries, Lasik carries the potential for complications, including:

- Glare, halos, starbursts, double vision and poor night vision
- Dry eyes that require drops daily
- Light sensitivity

Lasik Eligibility

Patients should consult their optometrist before undergoing Lasik, as not everyone is a good candidate for the procedure. An individual may not be a good candidate for Lasik if he or she:

- Has specific eye features such as dry eyes, large pupils or thin corneas
- Had changes in his or her vision prescription in the last year
- Has certain medical conditions like diabetes
- Is taking medications that may affect healing
- Has a history of eye disease, including herpes, glaucoma or inflammation inside the eye
- Has had previous eye injury or surgery
- Cannot stare at a fixed object for at least 60 seconds

Having Lasik

The surgery itself usually takes less than 30 minutes. A numbing drop will be placed in the eye, the area around the eye will be cleaned and an instrument called a lid speculum will be used to hold the eyelids open. Immediately after the procedure, the eye may burn, itch or feel like there is something in it. Despite instinctively wanting to rub the eye, individuals should not touch it, as doing so could create the need for more surgery.

While individuals are likely to experience vision problems in the days following the surgery, these symptoms should disappear after a few days. However, it may take up to six months for vision to stabilize fully.

