

Laser Vision Correction

Laser vision correction and LASIK surgery

Laser vision correction is a relatively quick outpatient surgical procedure that uses a laser to precisely reshape the cornea to minimize or eliminate dependency on corrective eyewear such as glasses and contact lenses. LASIK surgery is a major type of laser vision correction. LASIK is generally preferred because it offers rapid visual recovery and often takes less than 30 minutes to complete.

LASIK

This procedure is commonly used on patients to correct nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism. Before the procedure, the patient is given an anesthetic in the form of eye drops to numb the eye. The patient is awake during the procedure but will experience little to no pain. An ophthalmologist will use a special laser to create a flap about the size of a contact lens. This flap is then folded back to allow precise laser reshaping of the cornea. When this step of the procedure is complete, the flap is put back into place and generally heals on its own without the use of stitches. The patient is sent home immediately after the procedure. Full vision is generally regained later that same day or within the next day.

Customized LASIK surgery

This procedure is similar to LASIK surgery, the main difference being that the ophthalmologist can specifically customize surgery for each patient's eye condition. The customized LASIK procedure uses the most advanced technology available by using a three-dimensional picture of the eye.

Am I a candidate?

To learn if you are a candidate for LASIK or Customized LASIK surgery, schedule an appointment with an ophthalmologist to be evaluated. Minimum qualifications to consider include the following.

- Must be 18 or older
- Have a significant refractive error such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism
- Have a stable eye prescription for at least one year

The following conditions may prevent candidate eligibility for LASIK.

- Thin corneas
- Pupil size over seven millimeters
- Genetic problems affecting the cornea
- Some autoimmune disorders (e.g. rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, HIV/AIDS)
- Uncontrolled or advanced glaucoma
- Pregnant or breastfeeding
- Diabetes
- Use of prednisone pills or drops
- Irritation of the eyelids with itching and scaly skin
- Dry eyes

Risks and side effects

Like most surgical procedures, there are serious risks associated with LASIK but their incidence is quite small (less than one percent). Possible side effects and risks include glare, haloes, blurred or fluctuating vision, sensitivity to light, variation of vision with changing background light and dryness. Most of these side effects will generally disappear within one month after the procedure.

Recovery

Once the procedure is complete, the patient is released and may notice a difference in eye sight. Most patients notice a dramatic difference in eye sight and can return to normal activities, such as driving on their own the day after surgery. It may take months before some patients are able to achieve optimal vision.

Laser vision correction and UK HealthCare

Dr. John Conklin is a board-certified ophthalmologist, an associate professor at University of Kentucky College of Medicine, Department of Ophthalmology and director of UK HealthCare Refractive Surgery Service. Dr. Conklin is fellowship trained in comprehensive ophthalmology and has extensive experience in refractive surgery.

Dr. Conklin is on the leading edge of technology in the field of vision correction and is continually researching new techniques and innovations to provide his patients with the best possible care.

To find out more, contact UK HealthCare Refractive Surgery Service at **(859) 257-2020** or **www.mc.uky.edu/lasik**.

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