

All About Lasik Eye Surgery

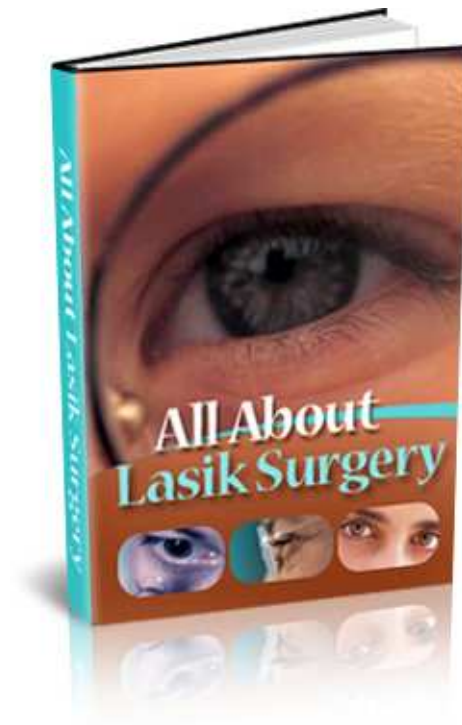


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Introduction

Millions of Americans thrash around for their glasses every morning. Others wake up to foggy contacts and wish there was a better way to see. Those who found out about Lasik eye surgery open their once blurry eyes and are instantly able to see the alarm clock and the beautiful morning day – no glasses and no contacts.

Lasik eye surgery, or Laser assisted in-situ keratomileusis, has changed the way millions of Americans have woke up for several years now. Lasik eye surgery is a procedure that is designed to correct poor vision. It is relatively painless and takes place in a simple office setting. This technology is unique has reduced the need for millions of people to use glasses or contact lenses. In most cases, people are able to discontinue their use all together and go about living a life with perfect vision.

If you are tired of your glasses or contact lenses and the hassles that go with them, then Lasik is probably something worth looking into for you. Many people have been able to achieve 20/20 vision or at least lower their prescription if their vision is particularly bad. It is very important for you to understand what you are getting into with any type of procedure and, as with all surgeries, there is always

potential for complications. Before going under the laser, you will want to do your research on the procedure and that's where this eBook comes into play. We will discuss everything that you need to know and do before you go in for surgery.

Chapter 1

The History of Lasik Eye Surgery

Lasik eye surgery, or Laser assisted in-situ keratomileusis, is a unique refractive laser eye surgery that is performed by ophthalmologists. This unique surgery is intended to help correct poor vision and it has worked wonders for millions of people.

The Development of Lasik

The first step towards Lasik was developed by Dr. Jose Barraquer. In 1970 Barraquer developed microkeratome. The procedure was used to change the shape of the cornea and to cut thin corneal flaps. The procedure was later named keratomileusis.

In 1990 the procedure was refined even more. Dr. Lucio Buratto, Italy, and Dr. Iolannis Pallikaris, Greece, changed the procedure to what it is known as today.

They combined keratomileusis with photorefractive keractomy, also known as PRK. PRK was then the latest form of laser eye surgery and it had the ability to permanently change the shape of the anterior central cornea by burning off necessary eye tissue from around the corneal stroma. The procedure is not typically preferred today, as it was quite a bit more painful than Lasik has become.

However, this was the second step in the process of getting to Lasik. As PRK began to show a number of complications and precision was required throughout the process, Dr. Thomas Neuhann and Dr. Tobias Neuhann of Germany developed the first automated Lasik surgery in Munich. That same year, Dr. Stephen Slade and Dr. Stephen Brint performed the PRK for the first time in the United States in 1991.

The Assistance of Wavefront Technology

In order for the Lasik process to be automated, it is necessary to gather information about the patient's visual system. This is necessary so that the laser is able to make the appropriate cuts on the cornea so that the procedure is customized to the patient's requirements. Wavefront technology is currently the best method for obtaining this information.

Wavefront technology has been available for quite some time, but it has only recently been used to assist in the Lasik eye surgery procedure. Wavefront has been used for several years by astronomers to adjust the optics in their telescopes. When the reflecting mirror inside the telescope becomes deformed, astronomers have used Wavefront to adjust the mirrors. The data would be used to remove aberrations.

Wavefront technology is a system that is able to provide a measurement of the refraction at multiple points on the eye as light is reflected upon it. This creates

a unique “map” of sorts, which is like a fingerprint of the patient’s eye because it is unique to the individual. Certain conditions within the cornea affect the refraction of light on the eye. Some of these are considered higher-order aberrations. These aberrations are usually associated with irregular astigmatism. The ability to correct the aberrations can result in a better result after Lasik surgery has been performed. The possibility of achieving 20/20 vision, or better is increased with the use of Wavefront technology.

Wavefront technology has also been able to reduce the likelihood of losing the best-corrected vision as well as visual quality and having difficulty with night vision. Clinical trials have shown that almost 80% of Lasik eye surgery patients undergoing custom surgery achieved 20/20 vision. There is a higher number of people who are reporting higher quality vision after having Lasik and Wavefront rather than traditional Lasik surgery. Wavefront is also used to help determine whether patients are ideal candidates for Lasik. In some conditions, Lasik can actually make visual problems worse. Wavefront can help prevent this from occurring.

Traditional eye exams can detect two corneal abnormalities, including cylindrical and spherical. A cylindrical abnormality is usually the cause of astigmatism. A spherical abnormality results in myopia and hyperopia, or near sightedness and farsightedness.

Wavefront technology can also detect an infinite number of the abnormalities. It does this by using a fixation target along with an input laser beam. The laser beam then generates a light source, which is a Wavefront sensor that is used to measure the slope of the Wavefront. The software then determines the characteristics of the eye.

The fixation target is used to help the patient maintain the proper view while the software measures the eye. As the patient fixates on the target, the laser beam

is shined into the eye. The light is reflected off of the retina and back through the pupil. The Wavefront of the light leaves the pupil and is then relayed into the Wavefront sensor. The refractive properties of the human eye distort the Wavefront. The laser beam that enters the eye is flat. In theory, this Wavefront of a perfect eye would remain flat and then reflect back. In actuality, the beam of light travels through a crystalline lens that is imperfect. The light then travels through the irregular cornea of the eye and various other parts of the eye. The combination of the light and laser causes the Wavefront to be irregular, which then results in data that helps to determine the shape of the cornea. This information is then evaluated and the aberrations of the eye are diagnosed. The information is then used as a prescription for reshaping the cornea.

There are three Wavefront manufacturers in the United States. These go by the names:

- 1 CustomVue (Visx 4S Laser)
- 2 CustomCornea (Alcon LADARVision Laser)
- 3 Zyoptix (Bausch & Lomb Technolas 217z Laser)

Each laser has the ability to create a map of the cornea and a customized prescription.

This technology is an advanced method of creating precise prescriptions for Lasik eye surgery patients.

Chapter 2

Pre-Surgery Procedures

Many people depend on glasses or contacts on a daily basis. Over the years, glasses and contacts become a way of life and become a daily habit, but they still have a certain amount of hassle associated with them. With Lasik surgery, many people are able to put away the glasses and contacts forever.

Insurance Concerns

Before you sign up for Lasik, be sure to check with your insurance company, especially if you have vision insurance. Most insurance companies consider Lasik to be a cosmetic or elective procedure. This typically means that they are not willing to pay for the procedure. In some instances, an employer will make special arrangements with Lasik centers for their patients. These arrangements often result in a special or reduced price for the procedure.

Other companies may offer expanded vision insurance programs. These expanded programs provide more than glasses and contacts, but Lasik as well. Expanded plans may not necessarily pay for the whole procedure, but for a part of it. This will make the surgery much more affordable if you seek it. Even if you do have an expanded plan, be sure to check with your insurance company before having the procedure done.

When you are considering having a Lasik procedure done, be certain to look at the various options in your community. Some advertisements have told people that Lasik can be performed for as low as \$500 per eye, but this is typically for people who have low vision problems. If you have a higher prescription, your procedure is likely to cost much more. The average procedure ranges around \$2,000. It may also cost more than this. It is also important to remember that a less experienced surgeon may charge less for his services. It is important not to choose a doctor based solely on the cost of the procedure. The surgeon may not necessarily have the latest technology, which could mean more pain for you.

Different countries also have different regulations on whether or not insurance will cover this surgery. For example, Africa, Latin America, Europe and Asia will cover Lasik through insurance, even if it is considered elective. Insurance companies in the United States and Canada so not cover the costs associated with the procedure.

Another option to pay for your procedure is through a flexible spending account. Many employers are offering these accounts as benefits for their employees. The money that is saved through the account can be used for medical procedures that are not covered by insurance plans. If you save enough money in the account, the cost of the procedure may be completely covered. If you do not have enough in the account, it can still be used to cover part of the procedure. If you are using your flexible spending account, you will have to alert the provider. There may be instances where you are able to pay for the

procedure by having your surgery deducted from your federal income tax return. Before you decide to have the procedure, discuss this option with your accountant.

It is important to realize that most patients are financially responsible for their surgery. The surgery can be costly, but there are various ways that you can defray the cost. Tell your Lasik surgeon what you can do and they may be able to finance the remainder of the procedure.

Ten Questions to Ask Your Doctor

Your eyes are vital to everyday life. When you are thinking about having surgery, you want to ensure that you are making a good decision. Many people will have Lasik and have excellent results. The procedure is designed to improve vision and it is a quick and painless procedure.

For doctors, it is best if their patients are well-informed of the procedure. You should also have realistic expectations as to what the potential outcome may be. A good doctor will exam your eyes carefully and will consider your health history. They will help you to determine if this is a good option for you.

There are a few questions that you will want to ask your Lasik eye surgeon including:

1 Am I a good candidate for Lasik?

- The Lasik surgeon should carefully determine whether or not you are a good candidate for Lasik vision correction. It has been proven that those people who are not good candidates tend to have complications. Your doctor should also be aware of any other health concerns before operating on you.

2 How long will recovery last?

- This is an important question that you need to ask your doctor.
This is because each doctor has their own rules for recovery time.
Depending on your surgery, you may have a longer recovery time.
You may also need to take off of work longer.

3 How much is the procedure?

- A procedure may vary depending on the severity your eyes. This main factor often dictates how much the procedure will cost.

4 What is included in the cost?

- Most doctors will tell you that all costs relating to the procedure are included in the cost that they give you. If it is possible, ask for a breakdown of the fees so that you can ensure there are no hidden fees involved.

5 Do you have payment plans?

- Because most insurance plans do not cover Lasik, many patients are required to pay for the procedure on their own. Unless you have already saved the funds required for the surgery, you may need to inquire about payment plans to pay for your surgery.

6 What type of procedure will be used?

- There are several techniques involved with Lasik surgery. Your doctor may specialize in one certain technique or they may perform different procedures. You will most likely want the procedure that is as pain free as possible and inquire whether or not Wavefront technology will be used.

7 What will happen during the surgery?

- Your doctor will be able to explain every step of the surgery. This is important because you will need to know what will be happening throughout the process. Most patients will be given eye drops that numb the eye area. If you are nervous, you may receive a sedative to calm you during the process.

8 What can I expect afterwards?

- Each patient will have a different result. It is important that you understand what to expect after you have the surgery. Some people experience no problems or pain, but your doctor should also discuss their expectations with you as well.

9 What risks and complications are involved?

- Most people will have positive outcomes with these procedures. There are also some risks and complications that may be involved with the procedure. It is beneficial for the surgeon to discuss risks and complications before your surgery.

10 What are the post-operative instructions?

- You will receive post-operative instructions to follow after the surgery. Your doctor will discuss with you when you can go back to work and do physical activity.

11 Will Lasik vision correction eliminate the need for corrective lenses?

- The short answer is maybe. Most people who have the procedure may still require glasses or contacts, but at a lower prescription. This is normal and still expected. Lasik is not a means to completely correct problems, but improve it.

12 Does the procedure hurt?

- The procedure is painless and quick for most people. Each eye only requires a minute or two and the eye is numbed with drops. You are awake for the entire procedure.

13 Will I need to take off work?

- Yes, most patients are required to take some time off of work after the procedure. This can vary according to the work. Most of the time you are able to go back to work within two to three days. If you are on the computer a lot, it may bother your eyes after the surgery.

Shopping Around for a Surgeon

When you choose your Lasik eye care professional, you will want to first get the opinion of your regular eye doctor and ask for recommendations. This will allow you to get a better idea of who in the area is trustworthy and respectable. Do not just go to the first name listed in the phonebook.

Your surgeon should be your doctor from start to finish. There are several surgery centers that run patients through quickly like a herd of cattle. This is not the situation you want because the surgeon will not be the one who does your initial eye exam and health history. These centers often have staff that handles the examination and you don't want this in your surgery center. Look for a customized experience.

Choose a surgeon that specializes in Lasik, preferably the most recent technology that is available. There are several different procedures and they may not all be Lasik. Before choosing your surgeon, ensure that it will be a Lasik procedure performed on you. You may still have good results with another procedure, but you never know what the outcome may be. Many experts believe

that you should go with a doctor who has done over 1000 Lasik surgeries.

While it is true that you may have success with your procedure, it is still important to know about any risks or complications that may be associated with your procedure. You should not expect perfect visions and you should not use a doctor that tells you it will be perfect.

Do not rely on centers that heavily advertise. While these Lasik doctors may be experienced, many do not offer personalized care. These doctors also tend to see many patients everyday and rely office staff to take care of their patients.

You also do not want to choose your doctor by the price alone. The worse your vision is, the more expensive your surgery is going to be. This is a fact that you will have to come to terms with. It is also important to realize that not all prices reflect all of their choices.

Choose a Lasik surgeon that is in your area. After your surgery, you will need someone to drive you home. You will also be visiting the doctor several times before and after the surgery.

Conditions that Lasik can Help to Correct

Improved vision is not the only reason that many people turn to Lasik. There are several eye conditions that Lasik can help to correct. It has been very popular for treating conditions such as:

- 1 Glaucoma
- 2 Macular degeneration
- 3 Diabetic retinopathy
- 4 Presbyopia
- 5 Astigmatism
- 6 Myopia

7 Hyperopia

What's Included in the Price?

This surgery is not cheap and you can expect to pay at least \$2,000. The price of the procedure may depend on where you live as well as the type of procedure you choose. Your vision problems also have an effect on the price.

When you have determined how you are going to pay for your surgery, you will want to work with the doctor to determine what is in the total cost.

What may be included in the surgery includes:

- 1 Appointments:** Most surgeons will include the cost of all of your appointments in the total cost. Ensure that all of these are included. You will have at least 5 appointments with the surgeon. The first appointment will determine your eye problems, the surgery, and the two or three follow up appointments.
- 2 Medications:** You will be given special eye drops for several days after you have your surgery. The cost is often minimal, but you should check to see if they are included in the cost of the surgery. You may also want to request a mild sedative to help you stay calm during the procedure.
- 3 One or Two Eyes:** Most prices will reflect two eyes, but many advertisements are for individual eyes. Ensure that both eyes are covered in your bill.
- 4 Additional Surgeries:** Some doctors will choose to have one eye done and then wait for a couple of months before doing the second eye. If this is your case, then these surgeries should be in your final price. If there are repair surgeries required later, you will generally have to pay for these

separately. Many surgeons will give a reduced rate for these surgeries.

Are You a Candidate?

Lasik surgeons typically define candidates into three different categories:

- 1 Ideal
- 2 Less than ideal
- 3 Non-candidate

There are several health issues that can decrease a patient's status when determining whether or not they are a good candidate for Lasik.

Extremely Low Vision

Lasik surgery is limited in the amount of vision that it can correct. Some people are beyond the procedure's ability to help. The FDA does not allow patients with more than +6.00 diopters of hyperopia or -14.00 diopters of myopia to undertake the surgery. In addition, patients with more than 6.00 of diopters of astigmatism cannot have the surgery as well. A doctor is able to determine this information through your refractive eye exam.

Our Eyes Grow Too

As people grow, their eyes continue to change shape and size. A young person's prescription may change constantly until they are 18 years old. Most prescriptions will stabilize at this time. Surgeons prefer to wait on surgery if the prescription has not stabilized. They like to see a patient with at least two years of a stable prescription. This helps to ensure them that the eyes are not going to change, as this would result in a change of vision should they perform the surgery too early.

Health Factors

There are various other health factors that may prevent you from being an ideal

candidate as well. If you have an autoimmune disease that causes you to heal slowly, this opens the door to more complications. If you require medications such as immunosuppressants or steroids, then you are also less than ideal as these medications cause you to heal slowly. Also, patients who are pregnant are not ideal because the shape of the eyes can change temporarily due to a hormonal influence.

Anterior Eye Health

Doctors divide the eye into two portions, the anterior and the posterior. The anterior is the front portion of the eye that includes the cornea, eyelids, iris, conjunctiva, sclera and lens. The surgeon will check for abnormalities in these parts of the eye with a biomicroscope, or slit-lamp. The doctor shines a line into the patient's eyes to examine the anterior of the eye. Abnormalities in these areas can decrease a patient's likelihood of being an ideal surgery patient.

Posterior Eye Health

The posterior portion of the eye is the back of the eye. There are several diseases that can be detected through a posterior eye exam including:

- 1 Glaucoma
- 2 Ocular hypertension
- 3 Diabetic retinopathy

This area includes the optic nerve, retina and blood vessels.

Irregular Shaped Cornea

A cornea that is irregular can be impossible to operate on. If patients have the condition keratoconus, they are ineligible for the procedure. This is because the cornea is a cone shape. A small amount of irregularity is okay, but a corneal topography will be required to determine the shape and severity of cornea shape.

Thin Corneas

Some patients have corneas that are thin, making it impossible to create the corneal flap in the surgery. If these patients were to have surgery, their vision would actually become worse instead of better. The doctor measure the thickness of the patient's cornea using a device called a pachometer. Lasik surgery is an extraordinary procedure that has helped thousands of people see better.

Pre-Surgery Procedures

Before beginning the surgery, the surface of the corneas are examined by a computer controlled device, such as Wavefront. This serves to determine the exact shape of the cornea and to map out the eye. It will then determine the degree of astigmatism and any other irregularities. This information allows the surgeon to determine how much corneal tissue needs to be removed and where. The patient is prescribed antibiotics before the surgery to minimize the risk of infection.

The patient who wears contact lenses will often have to stop wearing them for a period of time before the surgery. This allows the cornea to develop adequate oxygen. Low-oxygen permeable contact lenses reduce the ability of the cornea to absorb oxygen. Because of this, blood vessels may grow into the cornea through a process called corneal neovascularization. This can cause an increase in the inflammation of the area and cause the eyes to take longer to heal. It can also cause discomfort during the procedure.

Chapter 3

The Surgery

The patient will remain fully awake throughout the procedure and lies down for the surgery. A sedative is often used to keep the patient calm and anesthetic eye drops numb the eyes. For the first eye, a special type of retainer is placed over the eye to keep the eyelids open. The retainer includes a suction ring that aids in keeping the eyelids open. This aids the surgeon in cutting the corneal flap and is not uncomfortable to the patient. The surgeon then uses lasers to make incisions in the cornea. The computer system tracks the patient's eye position so that precise incisions are made.

Using a blade or femtosecond laser, the surgeon then cuts a flap in the cornea. The cornea is hinged on one end. The flap of the lining is pulled back to uncover the stroma of the cornea. This is the middle portion of the cornea. Using an excimer laser, the surgeon then reconfigures the corneal stroma by

vaporizing unnecessary tissue. The procedure does not damage the stroma. The laser uses cool ultraviolet light rays to remove very small pieces of tissue. The doctor removes more or less tissue depending on the severity of the vision problem. Some patients only need a small amount of removed.

After the corneal tissue is removed, the surgeon reshapes the cornea. As this procedure occurs, the patient hears a clicking sound. This is simply the laser running. You may also smell a mild and acrid scent. This is the smell of the tissue being removed. This procedure causes the cornea to focus better and improves vision. The flap is then placed back over the area and allowed to heal. The length of the procedure depends on how poor the patient's vision is.

Type of Lasers

The lasers that are used in Lasik eye surgery are truly unique and use exceptional technology. Excimer lasers were created specifically for Lasik. The FDA has approved each type of laser, but some lasers are better than others. The biggest difference is the way that the beam is delivered to the eye and their ability to track eye movement.

There are two broad categories of laser including broad beam and scanning. There are two categories within scanning lasers including slit scanning and spot scanning.

Broad Beam Lasers

Broad beam lasers utilize a large beam diameter, ranging from 6 to 8 millimeters, that cut the cornea. The use of these lasers shortens the amount of time that is necessary to complete the surgery. These lasers also reduce the risk of over correction due to pupil movement. The larger diameter makes the likelihood of complications more likely, but improved technique has eliminated most of this risk.

Slit Scanning Lasers

Slit scanning lasers use smaller beams. The beam is linked to a rotational device that has slit holes to enlarge the area that is being cut. Slit scanning lasers provide a more uniform beam and creates a smoother cut. There is a slightly greater chance of over correction with these lasers.

Spot Scanning Lasers

Spot scanning lasers are referred to as “flying spot” lasers. These use a small beam of 0.8 to 2 millimeters. The beam is scanned across the cornea in order to create the area to be cut. Spot scanning lasers have potential to create the smoothest cut. They are also able to produce customized cuts and are able to treat irregular astigmatism.

Eye-Tracking

Most lasers contain an eye tracking system. This system is linked to the position of the eye. Lasers without this system make it necessary for the patient to fixate on a distant object and to keep their eyes still. There are two different type of eye-tracking systems:

- 1 Open Loop – monitors the pupil’s location.
- 2 Closed Loop – Tracks eye movement and makes adjustments accordingly

Some sort of tracking system is required as it can be difficult for patient’s to fixate on an object for a long period of time.

IntraLase Lasers

The IntraLase is capable of creating the flap that needs to be cut in order to reach the cornea for shaping. The laser creates a precise pattern of small, overlapping spaces. These work at a very high speed. This allows the tissue to be target and divided at a molecular level. This laser also uses a special software that helps to guide the beam. The software instructs the beam to apply

a series of bubbles on the cornea. This results in a corneal flap. The technology has helped patients with thin corneas utilize Lasik.

IntraLase has far fewer complications than when microkeratomes are used. Surgeons have noticed that there is one possible complication. Some patients have a postoperative complication of being very sensitive to light after undergoing an all laser Lasik procedure. Many surgeons have also noted that this complication is only temporary and that using steroid eye drops has rectified the problem after a couple of weeks.

This system is more expensive as well. The “all laser” approach can add an additional \$300 per eye. Patients are often given the option between microkeratome or the IntraLase system. Some surgeons use IntraLase exclusively, so the cost is already included in their fee.

Chapter 4

Post-Surgery & Lasik Risks

There are several things that you will need to do post-surgery to ensure good eye health and better vision. You should always follow both pre-operative and post-operative instructions carefully.

Do Not Drive

Your Lasik surgeon will tell you not to drive for a specific amount of time after surgery. The time may depend on how well you are healing, but most patients are able to drive 48 hours for short distances after surgery. If you are experiencing low light or night vision problems, then you may need to restrict your driving in the evenings for a few more days. Also, depending on the type of work you do, you may need up to four days off of work after the procedure. It is also important that you rest your eyes so that they can heal.

Do Not Miss Post-Operative Care Appointments

It is recommended that you make post-operative appointments to check the healing of the eyes. These appointments are usually at one week, one month, and three months. You may also have a six-month appointment. These appointments are set before the surgery and keeping these appointments are important to track the healing progress after surgery.

Do Not Use Eye Make-Up

Most surgeons will recommend that you move all facial make-up and lotion. Do not wear make-up for three days before the surgery and after surgery. They will also ask that you refrain from wearing any lotions for up to 48 hours after the procedure. Afterwards you will be able to wear make-up except eye make-up. Eye make-up can be worn after about one week or when your surgeon gives you permission. This is important because you do not want any foreign debris entering the eye and causing infection. You may also accidentally poke your eye. You can shower after the surgery, but you should not use and facial soap or facial washes for two to three days after surgery.

Do Not Touch the Eyes

Your surgeon will advise you to not touch your eyes for any reason. You will be given eye drops, but nothing else should be placed in the eyes or eye area. Most patients will be required to wear an eye shield while sleeping. This helps to prevent accidental rubbing or poking. Touching may cause contaminants to enter the eye and an increased chance of infection. You may also damage the surgery area.

Do Not Do Any Strenuous Activity

Normal daily activities can be done after 48 hours. Golf and light workouts are

allowed one day after the surgery, but eye protection should be worn outside. After 24 hours, you are able to read, work on the computer and watch television. After three days, playing with children, sunbathing and sexual activity are allowed with proper eye protection. After 7 days, jogging, biking, and lightweights are allowed. If you are involved in extreme sports such as skiing, kayaking, skydiving or horseback riding, you will need to discuss these activities with your doctor. You will generally have to wait 3 months before these activities can be resumed.

What to Expect After Surgery

Healing of the corneal flap is critical after surgery. The flap must heal and reshape to the inner corneal surface. This is a great deal of concern for most patients because you can easily develop a mental picture of your corneal flap flying in the wind. It is comforting, however, if you realize that the eye has tremendous healing power.

The normal healing period is six months. Any problems that you may have had with your vision will typically disappear after this period of time. Some things may take longer to heal. For example, the corneal flap can take up to 2 years. It should not be a concern if it does take this long to heal, as it should not cause any vision problems.

After the surgery you should have a minimum of 5 visits with your doctor. The first appointment is 24 hours after the surgery. It is very important to attend all appointments to ensure that the healing process is being monitored.

In most cases you will be required to use eye drops for two to four weeks. These aid in any discomfort you may feel in your eyes.

Normal discomfort includes:

- 1 Watery eyes and a runny nose
- 2 Sensitivity to bright lights
- 3 Redness and minor swelling of the eye
- 4 Dry eye feeling
- 5 Slightly blurred vision

Other Post-Operative Tips

- 1 Do not use an OTC that contains aspirin. Use Tylenol or Advil.
- 2 Make sure to protect your eyes from bright lights and sunlight with sunglasses
- 3 Protect your eyes from water
- 4 Rest your eyes as much as possible and get extra sleep for the first few days after your procedure.
- 5 You will be give an eye shield to wear for the first 2 hours after the procedure and while you sleep for the next 3 to 4 days
- 6 Avoid all water sports and activities such as hot tubs, whirlpools, and swimming for the first two weeks
- 7 Don't go scuba diving for at least 6 weeks

Long-Term Effects

Approximately 94% of patients have improved vision immediately after the surgery is performed. Many patients will have 20/40 vision or better after receiving Lasik surgery. There are some complications that have been reported such as:

- 1 Seeing halos around lights at nighttime
- 2 Worsened vision
- 3 Infections
- 4 Poor night vision

The FDA warns that some patients may no longer be able to drive at night due to decreased night vision. This can be a serious side effect for some people.

Another long-term effect is that it is possible that correction is not permanent. Many patients have reported temporary improved vision, especially if you are already using reading glasses. Many patients have found that they still required their reading glasses after the surgery. However, the surgery is not designed to eliminate the need to wear glasses, but to reduce the need for them. Also, the need for reading glasses is caused by a natural maturity of the eyes and Lasik is not able to improve the need for these glasses.

Over six million people have received Lasik surgery. An estimated 99% of people have reported no serious complications past the normal healing period. When Lasik was new on the market, up to 5% of people who underwent the procedure had a post-Lasik problem. These number have been reduced due to:

- 1 Improved equipment
- 2 Increased Skills
- 3 Increased ability to identify suitable patients

If Complications Do Occur

In the event that post-Lasik complications occur, they are often resolved with medication, laser re-treatments or enhancements. Permanent vision loss is a slight possibility if the vision is degraded as a result of the surgery.

The normal healing period for Lasik is six months. Most complications will resolve themselves after this period of time. If the complications are serious, six months may seem to far away. Another option is to get a second opinion from another Lasik surgeon. They may have another idea as to how you can resolve your complications.

There is an organization that is designed to specifically address the needs of those patients who have suffered complications from Lasik. The CSQRA,

Council for Refractive Surgery Quality Assurance), is designed to help patients and can be found at www.complicatedeyes.org.

There is also a possible need for touch-up surgery after the initial surgery. On such factor that requires this is that if your eyes were particularly bad, you may not be satisfied with the results and need a touch-up surgery. Your surgery may result in some complications depending on the severity of your vision before surgery. Touch-up surgery is not highly unusual.

One guarantee about surgery is that there are no guarantees. Everybody heals differently and some take longer than others.

When to Get a Second Opinion

If you have lost confidence in your doctor for any reason, you should seek a second opinion. You can ask for a referral from your doctor, as it is very commonplace. You can also select another surgeon for a second opinion and then inform your doctor.

Lasik Gone Wrong

When Lasik goes wrong, there are a variety of complications that may occur. Some of these can be devastating while others are just annoyances that you have to live with.

Corneal Ectasia

This is a side effect caused by the build up of fluid pressure on the eye. The only way to fix this is to have a corneal transplant. This is a devastating side effect and corneal transplants occur few and far between. Most doctors do not mention this side effect when they discuss Lasik with you. It is something you should not be afraid to bring up, it shows your surgeon that you have done your

research.

Severe Dry Eye Syndrome

This is a side effect that occurs when your eyes are not able to produce enough tears to keep the eyes moist. This can cause major discomfort and is hard on the eyes. It can cause diminished vision and reduced quality of vision. This may be treated with eye drops and plugs. Some patients experience this temporarily while it is permanent for others.

Loss of Vision

Depending on the severity of your vision, it is possible to have a complete loss of vision after surgery. This is a serious complication that cannot necessarily be reversed. It is a big price to pay when you only had minor issues prior to the surgery.

Diminishing Effects

Some patients who have farsightedness experience a return of poor vision over time. This is because the effects of the surgery are not always permanent.

Results

Many people believe that Lasik can restore their vision to 20/20. However, this is not always the case. The fact of the matter is that not everybody is able to achieve 20/20 vision after the surgery. It is also difficult to find exact statistics as well.

CorneaTexas.com reports that there is a 96% success rate with Lasik.

According to the American Association of Professional Eye Care Specialists, about 55% of people will have 20/20 after the surgery. They do report that 92% of patients will achieve 20/40 vision. By the way, 20/40 is the minimum vision requirement in the US to get a drivers license.

The AAPECS also reports that in 100 consecutive patients in 1999, 93% of patients left surgery with 20/25 vision or better and 100% had 20/40 or better. The complication rate was 0.4% and the enhancement rate was 2%. This means that only 2 people required enhancement surgery after the initial surgery.

The AAPECS reports that adverse effects and complications are very, very rare but they do occur. They reported these statistics for adverse events.

| | |
|-------|---|
| 11.9% | Significant Undercorrection |
| 4.2% | Significant Overcorrection |
| 3.5% | Severe Halos |
| 3.0% | Loss of more than 1 line of best corrected vision |
| 1.9% | Loss of more than 2 lines of best corrected vision |
| 1.7% | Severe glare |
| <1.0% | Corneal epithelial flap, Increased IOP, Flap edema, Induced astigmatism |

A Few Statistics to Help with Your Decision*

- 1 In 2001, 1.8 million laser vision correction procedures were performed in the US.
- 2 About 2.4 million people had Lasik from 1997 to 2001.
- 3 In 1998, 14% of Americans were wearing contact lenses or glasses and they were “very interested” in surgery.
- 4 15% of Lasik procedures were performed in the 3rd quarter of 2004 using the IntraLase laser.

*Statistics from www.allaboutvision.com

These Statistics Show the Lack of Knowledge about Lasik in 2003*

- 1 73% of respondents to a Gallup poll said they new nothing at all about the new advances in the field of Lasik including Wavefront technology.
- 2 67% said they knew little or nothing about Lasik in general.
- 3 85% considered it was important to alleviate their dependency on their glasses or contacts and had considered the procedure.
- 4 56% admitted that they had never discussed the procedure with their doctor.
- 5 86% considered Lasik, but are waiting on a safer procedure.

*Statistics from a Gallup Poll reported on www.allaboutvision.com

The procedure is relatively new, only be approved by the FDA in 1998, but it is important to educate yourself prior to receiving the surgery.

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