

LASIK: What You Should Know

What is LASIK?

LASIK is a type of surgery in which a laser is used to reshape the surface of the eye. This helps some people with vision problems see better. LASIK stands for laser-assisted in-situ keratomileusis (KER-uh-toe-mi-LOO-sus).

How is it done?

A thin flap is cut from the front of the eye. Then a laser burns away tiny amounts of tissue in a special pattern. Finally, the flap is replaced.

Who can have LASIK?

Adults whose eyeglasses prescription has not changed in the past year may be considered for LASIK. People who are not good candidates for LASIK include those who:

- Heal slowly because of medicine use or disease
- Have thin or unusually shaped corneas
- Get a lot of infections, swelling, or ulcers in the eyes
- Have very dry eyes
- Are pregnant or younger than 18 years.

How well does LASIK work?

Most people don't need to use glasses or contact lenses after LASIK. Sometimes a second treatment is needed to get perfect vision. Some people who need very good vision, such as pilots or doctors, may still need glasses after LASIK. People who use reading glasses may still need them after LASIK.

Is LASIK safe?

Serious problems after LASIK are rare, and vision loss is very rare. Some people have dry eyes after LASIK. Eye drops or other treatments usually help, but some people can have this problem for a long time.

Other problems that sometimes happen after LASIK are hazy vision, trouble seeing at night, and seeing halos or starburst patterns around lights. These problems usually go away within six months after surgery.

The flap on the surface of the eye can be reopened if you hit your head or fall. People at risk of this kind of injury (such as boxers,



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skydivers, and racquetball players) should talk with their doctor about other options for vision correction.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

American Academy of Ophthalmology

<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/correction/LASIK.cfm>

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/lasik-eye-surgery/basics/definition/prc-20019041> and <http://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/lasik-eye-surgery/in-depth/lasik-surgery/art-20045751>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

<http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/ProductsandMedicalProcedures/SurgeryandLifeSupport/LASIK/default.htm>

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