

LASIK Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know if I am a candidate?

Most people who are in good health and are either nearsighted or farsighted or have astigmatism are candidates for some form of laser vision correction. In general, you should:

- Be at least 18 years of age or older.
- Have had stable vision for at least one year.
- Have no health issues affecting your eyes.
- Be in good general health

Am I nearsighted or farsighted and can laser vision correction treat it?

As long as your prescription falls within FDA-approved limits, LASIK or another advanced refractive procedure can correct either nearsightedness or farsightedness.

Being nearsighted, or myopic, means you cannot see things clearly in the distance. Nearsighted people need glasses to drive or to watch television, and some people with more extreme prescriptions may need glasses even to see the alarm clock in the morning. Most nearsighted people are able to read without glasses.

If you are farsighted, or hyperopic, you may have trouble seeing things up close. Without glasses or contacts, reading, eating or even talking to friends can all be difficult. Farsighted people can see things at distance a lot easier than they can see things close. Untreated farsightedness can lead to strain on the eyes, which can cause headaches. Just a couple of years ago the lasers were unable to correct farsightedness, however the recent advancements in the technology now allows farsightedness to be corrected.

I've heard so much about astigmatism. What is it? Does LASIK correct it?

Astigmatism refers to an asymmetric curvature of your cornea. A "normal" cornea shape is round, like a basketball. A spherical cornea focuses light equally and focuses images to a single point. If you have astigmatism, your cornea is shaped more like a football. A cornea shaped like a football has two different curvatures, which focus light separately and produces two separate images. Astigmatism can occur alone or in addition to either nearsightedness or farsightedness and can be corrected with LASIK.

Is there a vision correction procedure to help me get rid of glasses forever?

We are aware that some doctors advertise that LASIK will rid you of glasses forever. The goal of LASIK is to improve your eyesight and make you less dependent on glasses or contacts. Although we find most of our LASIK patients don't wear glasses often, many still need glasses for specific tasks. As we age, our eyes lose the ability to focus on images up close, a condition known as presbyopia (aka, the over 40 syndrome), then you will have to wear reading glasses for near tasks.

You may know some patients who have had LASIK and don't need reading glasses, even though you know they are over 40. What LASIK can do is correct each eye independently, one for

distance and the other eye can be corrected to be slightly near-sighted which allows one eye to see distance more distinctly and one eye to see near more distinctly. This concept is known as monovision.

What is monovision?

Monovision is an option to help correct both your distance and near vision. The procedure corrects the focus of one eye for distance vision and the other eye for near vision. One eye will see things close up, the other eye will see things farther away, and the brain will integrate the visual information from both eyes and filter out any blur. It is similar to the sound you hear from stereo speakers. A different sound comes from each one, but they work together to provide the entire range of sound. Most of our patients who are over 40 choose the option of monovision, however not everyone adapts to this means of vision due to their unique visual needs. We highly recommend that the concept of monovision be demonstrated with contacts before LASIK surgery is performed. In many cases, the amount of near vision in the non-dominant eye can be adjusted in contacts to find the most comfortable prescription for each patient and their work environment.

What is Wavefront Technology and Custom LASIK?

Wavefront LASIK (also referred to as Custom LASIK) is a highly customized laser vision correction technique that can correct your vision more accurately than ever before. Originally invented for NASA telescopes, Wavefront technology measures 217 different points on your eye, creating a 3-D Wavefront map of your eye. This information, as unique to you as your fingerprint, is transferred electronically to the laser, enabling the surgeon to guide the laser and customize a solution for your unique visual requirements.

Who can benefit from Wavefront LASIK?

Most people, including those with higher-order aberrations, can benefit from Wavefront LASIK. Until Wavefront was developed, those patients with a significant amount of higher-order aberration had less satisfactory results with conventional LASIK than others. Over 90% of people who currently wear glasses or contact lenses for nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism can now benefit from some form of laser vision correction. The best way to determine how a customized procedure may benefit you is to have a comprehensive eye evaluation and obtain a Waveprint™ map of your own individual visual “fingerprint.”

What is Intralase™?

Intralase™ (also known as IntraLASIK and All-Laser LASIK) is an interesting new procedure designed to make corneal flaps for LASIK surgery with a laser rather than a microkeratome (blade).

What are the risks?

As with any surgery, there are certain risks. Fortunately, however, the risks of laser vision eye surgery are low and patient satisfaction is high. The main risks include infection, over correction or under correction of your prescription, halos, a flap that shifts after surgery, and dry eyes.

- Infection: The risk of infection is VERY low, affecting only about 1 percent in 5,000

procedures. Your doctor will prescribe antibiotic drops for use after surgery and monitor your eyes to ensure that there is no sign of infection.

- **Over correction or under correction of your prescription:** Since the cornea is living tissue and everyone's eyes are different, it is possible for your vision to be slightly overcorrected or under corrected after surgery. If your eyes are over- or under corrected, it is usually possible to do an enhancement to correct the remaining prescription.
- **Halos:** After surgery, patients may see a "halo" of light around bright lights at night. For most patients, this occurs only for the first week or two after surgery, but some patients continue to see halos longer.
- **Shifting Flap:** It is possible that the flap created during LASIK may shift slightly immediately after surgery. This is most often a result of bumping or rubbing the eye early in the post-operative period. Twenty-four hours following surgery, the risk of the flap shifting decreases greatly. You should contact our office if you experience any sort of eye injury within the first day or two after surgery.
- **Dry Eyes:** The eyes are typically drier than normal for the first week or two following surgery, though some patients may experience dry eyes for a longer period of time. It is important to use lubricating drops frequently. If the eyes are uncomfortably dry for a prolonged period of time, your doctor can prescribe drops or suggest techniques that can help.

How long has laser vision correction surgery been performed?

The FDA approved the use of the Excimer Laser for laser eye surgery in the U.S. in 1996, although the microkeratome that creates the corneal flap has been used in other types of eye surgery since the late 1950s. Since the mid-1990s, LASIK has become increasingly popular with leading eye surgeons throughout the world, with over 6 million successful procedures performed to date.

What is the cost and will my insurance cover it?

Most insurance plans consider LASIK to be elective surgery, but there are a few that offer some benefit that can save you money on the cost of the procedure. Your employer's flexible spending or cafeteria plan may also offer tax advantages for LASIK. We can help you understand your options and what questions to ask your benefits administrator.

What's the first step?

Schedule a FREE, no obligation LASIK eye evaluation. Your Vision Source doctors and staff can explain all of the refractive procedures available and help you determine the best option for you.

How long does the LASIK procedure take?

The LASIK procedure itself takes 20 minutes per eye, with the actual laser treatment time lasting less than one minute per eye. Patients are usually in the surgery suite for no more than 25 minutes and at the center for no longer than an hour and a half.

What if I blink during the laser treatment?

A small restraining device called a speculum is used to gently hold your eyelids open during the procedure and prevent blinking. You will not be able to blink and affect the outcome of the

procedure.

Am I awake during the procedure?

Yes. All you need to do is relax and focus on the red light. Our new VISX STAR4 Excimer Laser will track and compensate for any eye movements during the surgery. Dr. Wade will talk to you throughout the procedure so that you know what to expect. You may elect to take a mild oral sedative, which we will provide for you, to help you relax.

What if I don't keep looking at the red target light?

The procedure is performed using a VISX STAR4 ActiveTrak laser. This advanced system will track any small eye movements and automatically make any needed laser adjustments. Dr. Wade is in full control of the laser at all times during the procedure. The laser will not fire if your eye movements take you outside the treatment zone.

Is the LASIK procedure painful?

Patients experience virtually no discomfort during LASIK. An eye drop anesthesia to numb the eye is administered prior to the procedure. If you experience post-operative discomfort, you may use Tylenol or ibuprofen during the first day or two after the procedure.

Can I have both eyes treated at the same time? Do I have to?

Dr. Wade performs bilateral (both eyes) procedures on the majority of his LASIK patients because he believes it is safe and patients prefer the convenience. Because the LASIK procedure affords a rapid visual recovery, you can comfortably enjoy the convenience of having both eyes treated at the same time. In some other procedures where the recovery time is longer, one eye is done at a time. However, it is always an option to have each eye treated on a different day.

How much time do I need to take off from work?

On the day of the procedure, you will be at the laser center for about 2-1/2 hours. After surgery, we recommend that you go home and rest, keeping your eyes closed as much as possible. Most patients do not require medication for pain. Sleeping or listening to the radio or a book-on-tape is a good way to pass the time. Watching TV or going to dinner is not recommended. On the day following surgery, most patients are able to return to work and other normal activities.

What can I expect after LASIK surgery?

What kind of results can I expect?

Many people notice an immediate improvement in their vision when they sit up after surgery, although there will be an initial haziness that should clear by the next morning. The vast majority of LASIK patients see 20/40 or better the day after surgery. Often patients drive themselves to their first post-operative visit.

Approximately 98% of patients can see 20/40 or better after conventional LASIK, and Wavefront

technology and Custom LASIK have the potential to make these good results even better. Six months to a year after having Custom LASIK, 91.5% to 98% of patients said that they could see 20/20 or better, and 40% said they could see better after their vision was corrected with Wavefront surgery than they did with glasses or contacts before surgery! Of course, your individual results may vary depending upon your pre-surgical prescription and the condition of your eyes. Your Vision Source doctor can provide more information regarding your potential outcome after he examines your eyes.

What precautions do I have to take after surgery?

The main precaution that needs to be taken after surgery is to not rub your eyes. You will be given wrap around sunglasses to wear over your eyes immediately after surgery and clear eye covers for the five nights following surgery to protect your eyes from inadvertent rubbing while sleeping. For the first month, care should be taken to not touch your eyes for any reason, and patients should avoid getting sweat, dust, or smoke in their eyes. It is also better to avoid swimming for two weeks, but with care, there is usually no problem with showers. Women should also avoid wearing eye make-up for the first week following surgery.

Are there any visual side effects?

Any visual side effects from LASIK are usually temporary. The most common ones are a "ghosting" or lighter second image around the edge or border of objects, nighttime halos (a rim of light around bright lights at night), mild fluctuations of vision, and light sensitivity. These effects can last anywhere from days to weeks and in some cases, may last for months. There is also a possible decrease in your ability to see well in low contrast situations, such as driving at night, although there is strong evidence that Custom LASIK will reduce the chance of these night vision problems and glare. Your Vision Source doctor will discuss the possibility of these visual side effects in more detail after he examines your eyes.

What is an "enhancement" and will I need one?

There is no guarantee of 20/20 vision following LASIK or any of the other vision correction procedures. It is possible, however, to have enhancement surgery if your Vision Source doctor feels that it is medically safe and will improve your vision. An enhancement is a second LASIK procedure used to "fine-tune" vision not corrected in the original surgery. The healing time after the enhancement is the same as after the first surgery.

Since everyone's eyes heal differently, no one can predict a patient's outcome with 100% accuracy. Generally, the worse your vision was before treatment, the greater the chance that you will need an enhancement. Enhancements are done no sooner than 2-3 months following the original surgery, allowing time for the eye to heal and vision to stabilize. On average, approximately 6% of patients need an enhancement.

Will I need to have this surgery repeated in the future?

The vision achieved with LASIK is generally the vision you will have for the rest of your life. The correction achieved with LASIK is long lasting and very little vision change has been seen after years of patient follow-up in clinical studies. Cataracts or other eye health-related problems may occur later in life, but are not caused by or directly related to LASIK.

Will I ever have to wear glasses again?

Since almost 98% of conventional LASIK patients achieve 20/40 vision or better and 98% of VISX Custom LASIK patients see 20/20 or better, most patients don't wear glasses at all after surgery. Those who do, generally use them only in certain circumstances such as driving at night or in the rain. For most people in their 40s, though, whether they have had LASIK or not, reading glasses may be necessary