

**KORNMEHL LASER EYE ASSOCIATES**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**  
**About Laser Eye Surgery**

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Patient Name

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DOB

**Q: What is refractive surgery?**

**A:** Refractive surgery is an outpatient procedure that corrects vision problems such as nearsightedness (myopia), farsightedness (hyperopia) and astigmatism. The surgery restores the eye's normal curvature and its ability to bring images into focus.

**Q: Who is a candidate?**

**A:** Refractive surgery is typically for patients 21 years of age or older who have nearsightedness (myopia), farsightedness (hyperopia) or astigmatism, and who meet certain visual and medical requirements. The ideal patient has a healthy cornea and has not had a significant increase in their prescription in the last year. In addition, most candidates are individuals who are dissatisfied with their contact lenses or glasses (often due to occupational or lifestyle reasons) and are motivated to make a change.

**Q: What is the excimer laser?**

**A:** The excimer laser has provided significant advancement in surgical techniques, particularly in the field of eye care. Unlike traditional lasers, the excimer laser produces a "cool" or non-thermal light beam, minimizing the risk of thermal damage to surrounding tissue.

Using the excimer laser to correct nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism can eliminate or reduce a patient's need for corrective lenses. The laser is guided by an advanced computer as it precisely reshapes the cornea, producing a sharper image on the retina. Excimer laser surgery is now considered to be one of the safest and most accurate methods of correcting nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism.

**Q: Why do patients choose excimer laser surgery?**

**A:** Many patients with nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism want to be free of the limitations of corrective lenses. Many patients enjoy swimming, diving, skiing and other athletic endeavors where wearing glasses or contacts is inconvenient or impossible. Some patients elect to have laser surgery for occupational reasons, while others feel visually and socially limited in their everyday activities.

**Q: Are there different types of refractive surgery procedures?**

**A:** Patients have various options for refractive surgery. The two most popular options are PRK (Photorefractive Keratectomy) and LASIK (Laser-in-situ-Keratomileusis).

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Q: What is the difference between PRK and LASIK?

A: Both PRK and LASIK use the excimer laser to reshape the cornea and correct nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism. Developed during the 1980's PRK is used to treat low to moderate amounts of nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism. In PRK, a thin layer of tissue is removed from the surface of the eye with a blade, brush or laser prior to reshaping the cornea. Patients may experience discomfort for 1-3 days, and full healing and vision correction are achieved in about one to four weeks. The LASIK method offers next day visual recovery and minimal discomfort that may last up to two hours. Sometimes referred to as "flap and zap" method, LASIK is an extremely effective outpatient procedure suitable for all levels of vision correction. During the surgery, a thin flap is made in the corneal tissue but not completely removed. Once the laser beam has been used to correct ("zap") the contour of the cornea, the flap is folded back into place and the procedure is completed.

Q: Why choose LASIK?

- brief recovery time
- minimal post-operative discomfort
- less post-operative medication
- high degree of predictability
- preservation of corneal surface
- freedom or reduced dependence on glasses and contact lenses

Q: Why choose PRK?

- can be used in many patients who are not LASIK candidates
- high degree of predictability
- no risk of flap complications
- no corneal weakening
- procedure of choice in athletes doing contact sports
- freedom or reduced dependence on glasses and contact lenses

Q: How long does the procedure take?

A: The procedure lasts about 15 minutes and is performed on an outpatient basis.

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Q: Does the procedure hurt?

A: Anesthetic drops usually allow the operation to be performed without pain. Afterwards, the eye is slightly irritated and scratchy, but most patients do not require pain medications and are able to return to work the following day.

Q: Technology seems to be changing every day, is something better coming down the road?

A: Technology continues to change and move forward. Newer technology makes surgical techniques available to a greater number of surgeons. LASIK continues to be a surgeon dependent procedure, and final results are dependent upon the skill of the surgeon.

Q: Can there be a problem 50 years from now because I had LASIK?

A: This is very unlikely. LASIK is a form of lamellar refractive surgery, and lamellar refractive surgery (myopic keratomileusis) has been performed since 1949. Patients who have undergone these related but less accurate and more invasive procedures 50 years ago have not developed any unusual problems.

Q: If I need to, can I wear contact lenses after surgery?

A: If you have a residual refractive error and you choose not to have an enhancement procedure, you may elect to wear contact lenses. If you were a good contact lens wearer before LASIK or PRK, it is unlikely you will have problems afterward.

Q: Will having LASIK prevent me from getting other eye diseases?

A: No. LASIK does not prevent cataracts, glaucoma, retinal detachment, macular degeneration, or other eye disease. Ophthalmologists term LASIK as disease Neutral: It doesn't cause disease, it doesn't prevent disease, and it doesn't prevent disease encountered in the future from being treated.

Please be aware that the evidence of cataracts increases after the age of 60. Some patients develop cataracts in their early 60's while others not until 70's or 80's.

Q: How long will the correction last?

A: Once your eye has stabilized (which is about three months with LASIK and six months with PRK), your correction is permanent. Any additional need for glasses after that will be the result of normal aging processes that befall everyone and not due to any instability of the refractive procedure.

Near vision: reading vision will be reduced and reading glasses will be necessary after the procedure if you are in your late 30's or early 40's and older.

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Q: When will I be able to go back to work?

A: Most patients go back to work with LASIK- next day, with PRK- Monday or Tuesday of the following week, depending on healing time.

Q: I have “dry eyes”, will it affect my LASIK surgery?

A: Many patients seeking refractive surgery do so because they have dry eyes and are unable to wear contact lenses anymore. It is important that your dry eyes be treated. This usually involves the use of tear supplements and punctum plugs (tiny silicone plugs placed into the tear drainage openings of your eyelid) that delay the drainage of your own tears so your eyes will stay moist. After the procedure, your operated eye(s) will be drier and typically lasts three to six months. Dry eye symptoms can be particularly noticeable if you use the computer frequently, read for long periods of time, or drive extended distances. These types of activities exacerbate dry eyes because they cause you to stare and not blink as often. It is important to use ample lubrication, especially during the first few months after surgery.

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