



# Eye on Health

## Is Laser Vision Correction Right For You?

(NAPSA)—Now nearly 15 years old, LASIK vision correction is the most common elective surgery in the United States, performed on 700,000 people annually. Besides being popular with patients, most of them are satisfied with the results. A recent analysis of studies looking at patients' satisfaction after LASIK, a popular type of laser vision correction surgery, found that more than 95 percent of them were satisfied with the procedure.

"LASIK stands for laser in situ keratomileusis and is a procedure that permanently changes the shape of the cornea, the clear covering on the front of the eye," said Marguerite McDonald, M.D., FACS, president of the International Society of Refractive Surgery and a clinical correspondent for the American Academy of Ophthalmology. "The change improves the way that the eye focuses light rays, decreasing your dependence on eyeglasses or contacts or, in the vast majority of cases, eliminating the need for distance correction entirely."

LASIK is performed in an outpatient surgical suite. The doctor creates a paper-thin, hinged flap on the top of the cornea. The computer-controlled cold laser then sculpts the exposed cornea tissue, removing microscopic bits of tissue. Flattening the cornea corrects nearsightedness, while steepening the cornea corrects farsightedness. Smoothing out irregularities in the cornea corrects astigmatism. The entire procedure takes about 10 to 15 minutes per eye. With LASIK, there is generally little discomfort during and after surgery. Vision is generally slightly blurry on the day of the surgery but improves considerably the next day.

"LASIK is not for everyone, and your ophthalmologist can advise you about certain conditions that may prevent you from being a good candidate for the procedure," added Dr. McDonald.



**Better vision and high satisfaction are seen in the overwhelming majority of LASIK patients.**

The ideal candidate is over 18 years of age, not pregnant or nursing and free of uncontrolled eye disease. You should not have had a significant change in your eye prescription in the past year and should have a prescription within the range of correction for LASIK.

Like any surgery, LASIK carries risks that should be carefully considered. Some people experience side effects after LASIK that usually disappear over time. These side effects may include discomfort or pain, hazy or blurry vision, scratchiness, dryness, glare, halos or starbursts around lights, light sensitivity, or small pink or red patches on the white of the eye that disappear in one to three days. Most of these are temporary and resolve on their own and most longer-term complications can be treated without any loss of vision. Serious complications leading to vision loss that cannot be corrected are possible but extremely rare. The same can be said about the very rare serious complications of wearing contact lenses.

If you and your doctor decide that LASIK is right for you, you may join millions of people who have had a refractive surgery procedure and are enjoying active lifestyles less dependent on eyeglasses or contacts.

For more information, visit [www.GetEyeSmart.org](http://www.GetEyeSmart.org).