



# Eye on Health

## What You Need To Know About LASIK

(NAPSA)—Things may be looking up for the estimated 55 million Americans eligible for vision correction surgery. New technology is making LASIK safer and better.

LASIK is the nation's most popular vision correction procedure, representing approximately 90 percent of all refractive procedures performed annually. In 2004, some 1.4 million LASIK procedures were performed.

The surgery has always been a two-step process. In the first step, the surgeon makes a thin flap and folds it back for the second step, during which a device called an excimer laser is used to ablate corneal tissue for vision correction.

Until now, advancements such as Custom LASIK and Wavefront have focused on improving the second step (precise tissue ablation). Now, new research shows the importance of the first step on visual outcomes. The discovery was made when surgeons began using a new laser, instead of the handheld microkeratome blade, to create the corneal flap.

Doctors found that in addition to fewer complications, more patients achieved vision better than 20/20—up to 20/15 and even



**Eighty-eight percent of patients have better than 20/20 vision—up to 20/15—after having IntraLase-initiated LASIK, where the ultra-fast, ultra-safe laser replaces the metal blade used in traditional LASIK.**

20/12.5—when the IntraLase laser was used in the first step.

“It turns out that the flap that we make in LASIK is not an innocent bystander. Data now validates what we suspected but hadn't proven; that the rate of achieving high levels of vision is better with the IntraLase laser than with the metal microkeratome,” says Dr. Roger F. Steinert, vice chair of clinical ophthalmology at the Uni-

versity of California at Irvine.

For many people eligible for LASIK who have held off on having the procedure due to the fear of the blade and/or complications, here are some great reasons to consider having it now:

- **Better Vision:** More patients achieve statistically better vision with IntraLase-initiated LASIK—often better than 20/20.

- **Improved Safety:** IntraLase virtually eliminates the most severe complications.

- **Fewer Retirements:** The number of LASIK retreatments required to perfect the visual outcome is significantly lower.

- **Reduced Dry Eye Symptoms:** Clinical studies of dry eye symptoms showed a reduction by as much as 72 percent.

- **Benefits More Patients:** Patients with thin corneas who may not have been considered for the LASIK procedure, may now be candidates.

If you've been holding off on having your vision corrected and are ready to take the plunge, ask your ophthalmologist to use IntraLase instead of a blade, the safest option now available for LASIK.