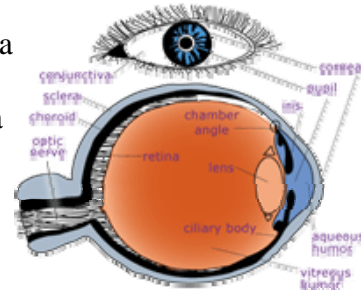


What is LASIK?

LASIK stands for Laser-Assisted *In Situ* Keratomileusis. It is a procedure that generally takes about 30 minutes and is often painless. In this particular surgery, a flap is cut into the cornea of the eye and then lifted up to expose the stroma, which is the midsection of the cornea. Pulses from a computer controlled laser are then used to reshape the cornea. This reshaping affects the way light is refracted within the eye, and changes vision. The flap is then replaced and allowed to heal on its own.



What should I expect before the surgery?

- You should expect a complete baseline evaluation by your eye doctor to first determine if you are a good candidate.
- If you are a contact wearer, you will need to eliminate the use of your contacts prior to this evaluation due to the fact that contact lenses temporarily change the shape of your cornea. At this evaluation, measurements are taken of the cornea to determine how to shape the cornea in the surgery and it is important that the natural shape of your eye is measured. Depending on your contact type, it can be anywhere from 3 days to 4 weeks before your visit.
 - Soft Contacts—3 days to 2 weeks before
 - Rigid Gas Permeable Lenses—3 weeks before
 - Hard Lenses—4 weeks before
- You should discuss any questions or concerns with your doctor at this time. You should also determine:
 - If you are a good candidate for the surgery
 - Risks, Benefits, and Alternatives to the surgery
 - What your responsibilities will be after the surgery and any and all types of follow-up care as instructed by your doctor
- You should discontinue the use of any makeup or products including:
 - Creams
 - Makeup
 - Lotions
 - Perfumes

Use of these or the presence of any debris on the eye lashes may lead to an infection after the surgery.

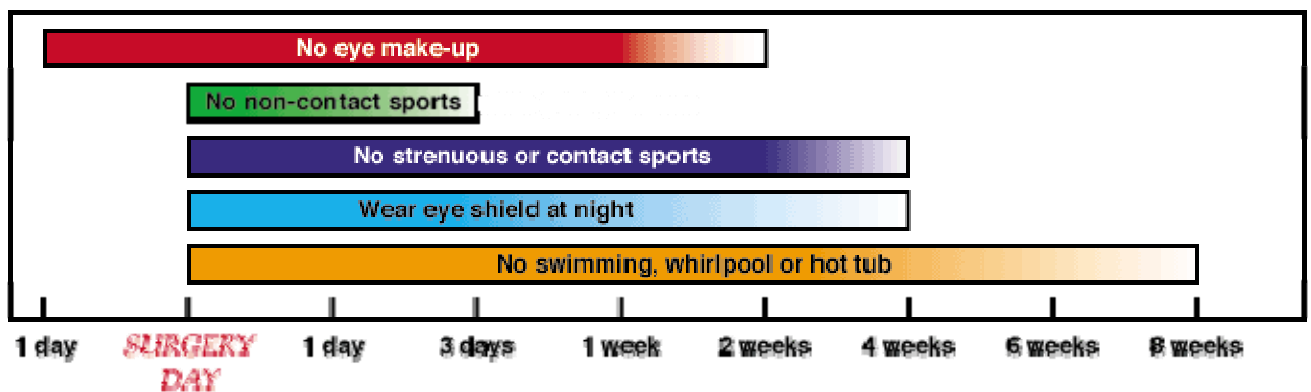
What is the actual surgery like?

- This surgery is done by a computer controlled laser and takes around 30 minutes. Before the start of it, your doctor will program the laser based on the measurements from your evaluation.

- A numbing drop is placed in your eye and the eye area is cleaned. A lid speculum is inserted to hold your eye lids open and a ring is placed on your eye and suctioned to the cornea using high pressures. At this point, you may experience some discomfort.
- A microkeratome will then be used to make an incision in the cornea and then the ring and microkeratome are removed.
- Your doctor will then lift the flap and dry the exposed tissue. A laser will be positioned and you will be asked to stare at a light and the laser is started. After it is done vaporizing the corneal tissue, the flap is put back in place.
- You will then have to wear an eye shield after the surgery and at night for 4 weeks in order to prevent rubbing or getting poked or hit.

What are my responsibilities and expectations for after the surgery?

- Your eye may itch, burn, or be irritated after the surgery. They might also tear or water. Your vision may also be hazy or blurry and you may see haloes around bright lights and be sensitive to them. The whites of your eyes may also be bloodshot. However, this should only last a couple of days and should improve considerably.
- You should have a follow up visit 1-2 days after the procedure. You should continue these for the next six months at least.
- You may also need to take eye drops to prevent infection.
- It may take three to six months after the surgery for your vision to stop fluctuating. You may also experience glare, haloes, and difficulty driving in certain situations, especially at night. Although your vision may improve, it is not likely that these other symptoms will.
- According to the FDA, you should wait at least:
 - 2 weeks to resume wearing eye make-up
 - 1-3 days to begin playing non-contact sports
 - 4 weeks to begin playing contact or strenuous sports
 - 8 weeks to swim in whirlpools or hot tubs



Good practices to follow before and after surgery

What makes me a good candidate for LASIK?

A good LASIK candidate should:

- Be 18 years or older
- Have a stable prescription for at least two years prior
- Have a cornea that is thick enough for the surgery (as determined by your doctor)
- Are affected by myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness), astigmatism or a combination of either myopia with astigmatism or hyperopia with astigmatism. All of these problems are common and easily corrected with LASIK.
- Not suffer from any disease or take any medicine that may negatively affect the patient's ability to heal such as an autoimmune disease, diabetes, or some medications such as steroids.
- be adequately informed of all risks and benefits of LASIK and have a clear expectation for the surgery. LASIK may not completely eliminate the need for corrective eyewear, but will make vision better and sharper.

What are some risks associated with LASIK eye surgery?

- loss of vision
- severe dry eye syndrome
- results may diminish with age, as is the case with some farsighted patients. LASIK does not treat presbyopia, the condition of vision worsening with age.
- You may develop:
 - Glare
 - Haloes
 - Double vision
 - Decreased vision in low contrast, night, or fog
- Some serious complications is rare instances can occur such as:
 - Malfunction of a device or human error which could result in irreversible damage to the eye and vision
 - Migration of the flap
 - Infection
 - Blindness
- There are also other risks if you are considering:
 - Monovision (where one eye is treated to see things up close and the other for things far away)
 - Bilateral Simultaneous Treatment (having LASIK on both eyes on the same day)

Conclusion

As always, there are risks associated with every surgery and it is important to find the right doctor for this procedure. Many recent research and articles have been published

Nicole Sigurdson
HONR 499B

and one in particular by Dr. Zadnik Bailey concludes that any night vision and dry eye syndrome problems are not improved by LASIK surgery in myopic patients. They are working on examining whether future technologies and methods may improve these results so it is important to stay current with the technology. Make sure that you compare physicians—do not take the first offer. It is also important that money not be the basis of the entire decision when it comes to your eyesight. Also remember to be wary of deals that “guarantee 20/20 or your money back” or if they include a “package deal” or other sketchy promise. LASIK does not guarantee 100% vision correction—it is different from patient to patient and case to case. As always, consult your doctor for any other health concern and for a full evaluation and assessment prior to your surgery.

References and For More Information:

“LASIK Eye Surgery” <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/LASIK/what.htm>. Accessed April 9th, 2007.

“Lasik and Laser Eye Surgery—A Complete Consumer Guide”
<http://www.allaboutvision.com/visionsurgery/> Accessed April 9th, 2007.

“Eye Surgery Education Council” <http://www.eyesurgeryeducation.com/> Accessed April 9th, 2007.

Bailey MD, Zadnik. “Outcomes of Lasik for Myopia with FDA-Approved Lasers”. April 2007. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?CMD=Display&DB=pubmed>
Accessed April 24, 2007