

THINKING ABOUT HAVING LASIK?

Patient Steps toward a Successful LASIK Experience

LASIK has been widely available for more than 20 years and is a safe and effective vision correction option for those who are nearsighted, farsighted and/or have astigmatism. Like all medical procedures, LASIK has risks and benefits. Because it is an elective procedure, LASIK is a personal choice; one that deserves your focus and attention because, after all, it is surgery and your vision is important. The decision to have LASIK should include questions and research that everyone should consider. Everyone is different, but below are some suggestions to help ensure that your LASIK experience meets your expectations:

Ask yourself some questions

- Do glasses and/or contacts interfere with my daily life?
- Am I active? Into sports or outdoor activities? Does my need for glasses/contacts interfere with those activities?
- Am I diligent in the use and care of my contact lenses?
- Do my glasses provide adequate vision correction? Do I feel safe relying on my glasses?
- Does a vision care procedure, such as LASIK, interest me as an option to fit and enhance my lifestyle?

Learn about LASIK

- Research the procedure online and find out what LASIK is (and what it is not). Some good resources, in addition to the American Refractive Surgery Council, are:
 - [AllAboutVision](#)
 - WebMD
- Talk to at least 2-3 individuals who have had LASIK (friends, coworkers, neighbors and family members). Ask about their experience with the procedure. Here are some points to cover:
 - Why did you have LASIK?
 - What was it like to have LASIK? Did it hurt? What was the recovery like?
 - Who was your ophthalmologist? How did you find out about him/her? Why did you choose him/her to perform your LASIK? Did you like the staff?
 - What kind of testing was done before the procedure? What was the follow up like after the procedure?
 - Would you recommend your ophthalmologist (if they live in your area)?

ARSC: Considering LASIK?

Page 2

- Make an appointment with your personal eye care professional and ask questions, such as:
 - What should I know about LASIK?
 - Is LASIK a good option for me? Is LASIK a good option for me at this phase of my life?
 - Given my specific vision, will I still need glasses?
 - If talking to an optometrist: Which ophthalmologists (eye surgeons) would she/he recommend to perform LASIK?

Find the surgeon who is right for you

- Find a board certified ophthalmologist in the area who has a lot of experience with the procedure with a practice that fits your personal style. It is not uncommon for a LASIK surgeon to have 10,000, 25,000, 50,000 or more procedures under his or her belt.
 - Confirm their qualifications. Board certification by the American Board of Ophthalmology is a minimum requirement.
 - Experienced surgeons often have additional certifications, teach at a medical school and/or participate in clinical research.
 - Ask for patient references and make the time to reach out to them and talk through their LASIK experience with the surgeon you are considering.
- Ask prospective surgeons what makes a good LASIK candidate and what percentage of patients they end up not doing the procedure on due to candidacy.
 - Factors that make a person a poor candidate for LASIK include thin or irregularly shaped corneas, certain health conditions and unrealistic expectations.

Become a qualified LASIK candidate

- Many ophthalmologists offer free consultations to those considering LASIK.
- Come to the consultation prepared with any and all questions you have about the LASIK procedure and the surgeon's qualifications.
- You should expect the consultation to take approximately 2-3 hours during which time you will have your vision, eyes and overall health thoroughly evaluated to determine if you are a candidate for LASIK surgery.
 - Share your full health history with your doctor. There are medical conditions, such as diabetes, that may make LASIK and other laser vision correction options a poor choice. Also, certain medications, such as corticosteroids, can affect the healing process.
- Once the evaluation is complete, ask specifically, given your specific circumstances, what kind of outcome you can expect from LASIK.
- In addition to determining your candidacy for LASIK, the ophthalmologist should answer all of your questions and help you to understand the risks and benefits of LASIK.
 - Ask the surgeon about post-surgery enhancements and factors for deciding to do a retreatment.

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Page 3

- A reputable practice will ensure that you receive all of the materials you need to make a decision. Take the time to thoroughly read and familiarize yourself with everything, including the informed consent.
- You may choose to consult with more than one surgeon in order to find one who meets your needs.
- Do not be pressured by special offers or coupons. If a LASIK price looks too good to be true, it may be. An especially low price may not reflect your total costs, as some services may be extra.
 - If you aren't certain about a price, ask for a written estimate that tells you exactly what it includes-and what it doesn't.
 - "Bargain" LASIK may be restricted to simple prescriptions (low nearsightedness) or older generation technologies, which may not give you the excellent results you can expect from newer techniques.