

Fact Sheet for Media: Understanding LASIK

This fact sheet provides clinically-factual information about LASIK and other laser vision correction procedures that you can source for any stories you are planning. Interviews can be arranged with surgeons and researchers to provide expert commentary.

Additional resources available from RSC include clinical studies, animation and coordinating surgical b-roll footage.

What is LASIK?

LASIK – the acronym for Laser Assisted in Situ Keratomileusis – is a form of laser vision correction surgery first approved in 1999. It is a safe and effective option for vision correction for those who are good candidates.

- LASIK uses laser technology to reshape the cornea to reduce or eliminate the visual irregularities that cause nearsightedness, farsightedness and/or astigmatism. The procedure is quick and virtually painless:
 - First, a thin, circular flap is made in the cornea using a microkeratome or femtosecond laser. The surgeon then folds the flap out of the way.
 - In the second step, the corneal tissue underneath is reshaped using an excimer laser, a cool ultraviolet light beam, to remove microscopic bits of tissue. The flap is then laid back in place, covering the reshaped cornea.
- Today, LASIK employs advanced technologies including 3D mapping, wavefront guided or optimized excimer lasers and microkeratome or femtosecond laser flap technology to provide superior safety and more precision for surgeons to customize procedures for the patient and better visual outcomes.

How many people have had LASIK?

According to Market-Scope, more than 19 million LASIK procedures have been performed in the U.S.

Are there other forms of laser vision correction surgery?

Yes. Other forms of laser vision correction surgery include procedures such as PRK and SMILE.

- PRK or Photorefractive Keratectomy is an older form of laser vision correction. It involves removal of the outer layer of the cornea. It is sometimes used for people who are not eligible for LASIK.
- SMILE or Small Incision Lenticule Extraction was approved by the FDA in 2016. In SMILE, a femtosecond laser removes a small piece of tissue from within the layers of the corneal tissue in order to help correct nearsightedness and astigmatism.

Is LASIK safe and effective? How do we know?

After 20 years and 19 million procedures, we know LASIK is safe and effective.

- LASIK has been the subject of over 7,000 peer-reviewed clinical studies – which means it is one of the most-studied and best understood surgical procedures.
- The clinical data on LASIK gathered by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the American Society for Cataract and Refractive Surgery and hundreds of academic medical researchers across the globe confirm a patient satisfaction rate of more than 96 percent.
- The latest research shows:
 - More than 90 percent achieve 20/20 vision, and nearly 100 percent of patients achieve at least 20/40 vision.
 - Overall, 90.9% of patients were within 0.5 diopter of target correction, and 98% were within 1 diopter.
 - The risk of sight-threatening complications from LASIK is below 1 percent.

Does LASIK have complications or side effects? What are they?

LASIK is surgery, and like any surgery, it involves risks and side effects.

- Potential side effects include dry eye, glare, halos, blurred vision, or night vision problems. These are common during the healing process, and they go away over time. Some patients may experience dry eye, glare, halos, night vision symptoms for 6-12 months.
- There are many treatment options for dry eye symptoms.
- There have been recent reports of eye pain (neuropathic pain or corneal neuralgia) related to LASIK. This is extremely rare and needs to be evaluated further.
- The most important point is that LASIK is not for everyone. Not everyone is a good candidate. For example, people with thin corneas are not good candidates for LASIK. It's important to choose an experienced LASIK surgeon and clearly understand the risks and benefits of the procedure so that they can make the decision that's right for them.

What should people do who are considering LASIK?

People considering LASIK should:

- Find a qualified surgeon. Qualified surgeons are board-certified, with significant experience in performing the procedure. It is not unusual for highly qualified surgeons to conduct clinical research and hold positions at teaching hospitals.
 - Talk at length with the surgeon to understand the risks as well as the benefits of LASIK, what to expect before, during and after the procedure, what the recovery process will be like, and what LASIK can and cannot achieve.
- Remember that LASIK is not for everyone – it's important to do the homework and then make an informed choice about the best vision correction option for you as an individual.

For more information contact Lisa Spicer at (818) 326-9351 or lisa@engagedcommunication.net

Resources for LASIK News Stories

Experts Available to Comment on Laser Vision Correction Surgery

Eric Donnenfeld, M.D.

Member, Executive Committee, American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery
Medical Editor, EyeWorld

Kerry Solomon, M.D.

Past President, American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery

John Vukich, M.D.

Chair, Refractive Surgery Clinical Committee, American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery

LASIK Research - More than 7,000 clinical studies have been conducted over the past 20 years since LASIK was first introduced. The following studies offer a snapshot of the data available supporting LASIK as safe and effective:

[Modern LASIK Outcomes](#)

[Global LASIK Patient Satisfaction](#)

[Patient-reported Outcomes with LASIK \(PROWL\)](#)

The most cited **peer-reviewed research** into LASIK is available in these medical publications:

Journal of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (<https://www.jcrsjournal.org/>)

JCRS is the official journal of the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS) and the European Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons (ESCRS).

Ophthalmology (<https://www.aaojournal.org/>)

The journal of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, *Ophthalmology* serves society by publishing clinical and basic science research and other relevant manuscripts that relate to the sense of sight.

Editor's Note: Scientific data is often misrepresented. We are happy to make clinicians available for fact-checking as needed.