After LASIK

The ophthalmologist may place a

After a flap is created in the cornea, the laser

What are the risks of LASIK?

Like any surgery, LASIK carries risks of problems or complications you should consider:

Some people have side effects after LASIK that usually go away over time. However, in rare cases, they may not go away. For example, almost everyone who has LASIK will have dry eyes and changing vision during the day. These symptoms usually fade within a month. For some people, though, they may take longer to disappear or they may remain.

Other side effects, either temporary or permanent, could include:

- eye pain or discomfort
- halos (rings) or stark/blurry vision
- scratchy eye
- dryness and help your eye
- other side effects include:
  - eye pain or discomfort
  - halos (rings) or stark/blurry vision
  - scratchy eye
  - dryness
  - redness
  - eye infection
  - nerve (optic) damage (called loss of best-corrected vision)

Also, with LASIK, your vision may end up being undercorrected or overcorrected. These problems often can be improved with glasses, contact lenses, or additional laser surgery.

If you are happy wearing contact lenses, you may not want to have refractive surgery. Together, you and your ophthalmologist can weigh the risks and rewards of LASIK.

Vision after LASIK

About 6 out of 10 people (60%) who have LASIK end up with vision between 20/20 and 20/40—without glasses or contact lenses. This is the normal loss of close-up vision that comes with age. However, some people have LASIK to achieve vision 20/20 for certain activities, such as reading or driving at night.

With LASIK, people can do most of their everyday tasks without corrective lenses. However, you might need to wear glasses for certain activities, such as reading or driving at night.

Your ophthalmologist will thoroughly examine your eyes to make sure you are a good candidate for LASIK. You and your ophthalmologist will also discuss the risks and rewards of this refractive procedure.

If you have any questions about your eyes or your vision, speak with your ophthalmologist. He or she is committed to protecting your sight.
What is LASIK? LASIK is a type of refractive surgery. This kind of surgery uses a laser to treat vision problems caused by refractive errors. You have a refractive error when your eye does not reflect (bend) light properly. For you to see clearly, light rays must travel through your cornea and lens. The cornea and lens reflect the light so it lands on the retina. The retina turns light into signals that travel to your brain and become images. With refractive errors, the shape of your cornea or lens keeps light from bending properly. When light is not focused on the retina as it should be, your vision is blurry.

Who is a good candidate for LASIK?
To have LASIK surgery, you need to meet certain requirements. Here are some of them:

- You should be 18 years or older (ideally, over 21 years old), since vision is more likely to have stabilized in this age.
- Your eye prescription should not have changed much in the last year.
- Your refractive error must be one that can be treated with LASIK.
- Your corneas need to be thick enough and healthy, and your overall eye health must be generally good.
- You need to have realistic expectations about what LASIK can and cannot do for you.

Some people are not candidates for LASIK. They include people with:

- keratoconus (cone-shaped cornea)
- advanced glaucoma
- any eye problems worse.

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What to expect with LASIK
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With LASIK, your ophthalmologist uses a laser to change the shape of your cornea. This procedure changes how light is reflected onto the retina. LASIK is used to treat myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness) and astigmatism.

The goal of LASIK is to correct your refractive error to improve your vision. LASIK may reduce your need for eyeglasses or contact lenses. In some cases, it may even allow you to do without them completely.

- a curvature affecting vision
- a history of having certain eye infections
- diabetes that is not controlled well
- pregnant or nursing women

Your ophthalmologist can talk with you about other conditions that may keep you from having LASIK. To determine whether you are a candidate for LASIK, your ophthalmologist will examine your eyes. Here is what he or she will do:

- The overall health of your eyes will be checked.
- Measurements of your corneas will be taken.
- Your corneas will be measured.
- Your pupil size will be checked.
- Your refractive error will be measured.

In some cases, your ophthalmologist will measure the quality and the amount of tears that your eyes make. This is to check if you have dry eyes, and if so, how severe it is.

How to expect with LASIK
Before surgery, your ophthalmologist will discuss your vision needs based on your lifestyle. For example, if you play sports, you might be seeking clear distance vision from surgery.

Also, you and your ophthalmologist will discuss your expectations of LASIK. People who have LASIK to achieve perfect vision without glasses or contacts run the risk of not being pleased. LASIK allows people to do most of their everyday tasks without eyeglasses or contact lenses. You may need to wear glasses for certain activities, such as reading or driving at night.

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