

Stockton and Sutter Creek, California Vision Correction Procedures Frequently Asked Questions

Isn't all laser vision correction the same?

No. Many of the discount LASIK centers want you to believe that LASIK should be purchased like a commodity and that surgeon experience, lasers, diagnostic technology and follow-up care don't matter. Laser vision correction will affect the way you see for the rest of your life. You should make your decision to have laser vision carefully, not quickly. Our Web site has a lot of information about our Stockton, California [surgeons](#), our [technology](#) and what you should expect for the money you spend. We provide you with all of this information because we feel the more you know about us, the more confident you will feel about choosing us as your laser vision correction provider. We also encourage you to attend one of our [free educational seminars](#) to learn more about our practice [and why you should choose us](#).

Will I have 20/20 vision following laser vision correction?

The goal of any refractive surgical procedure is to reduce your dependence on corrective lenses. However, we cannot guarantee you will have 20/20 vision as a result. Our commitment to you is that we will not perform laser vision correction on you or anyone we feel does not have a good possibility of achieving independence from glasses and contacts. The vast majority of our patients are extremely happy with their results and can do most activities without dependence on corrective lenses after laser vision correction.

Is laser vision correction safe?

There are possible risks with any surgical procedure. Serious complications with [LASIK](#) or [PRK](#) are extremely rare. The chance of having a vision-reducing complication from LASIK has been documented in clinical studies to be less than one percent. Many of the risks and complications associated with this procedure can be reduced or eliminated through careful patient selection and thorough pre-operative testing using the latest [diagnostic technology](#).

After laser vision correction, you may experience some visual side effects. These are usually mild and most often diminish over a few days to a few weeks. But there is a slight chance that some of these side effects won't go away completely, such as feelings of dryness, glare and halos. If after a thorough examination we decide you are a good candidate for laser vision correction, you will be given additional information about the procedure that will allow you to make an informed decision about whether to proceed. Be sure you have all your questions answered to your satisfaction.

Has anyone ever gone blind because of LASIK?

In the many thousands of LASIK cases performed worldwide, we know of no recorded incidence of anyone losing their eyesight due to this procedure.

What about nighttime side-effects?

You have probably seen news stories about people having difficulty driving at night after refractive surgery. Nighttime side-effects may include halos, starbursts, and glare around

lights and blurry vision. Some of these can be caused by overcorrection, undercorrection, or residual [astigmatism](#). These effects usually diminish as the eye heals in the first three to six months. Sometimes additional touch-up (enhancement) procedures will be recommended.

Another possible cause of nighttime side-effects is pupil size. At night, the pupil expands to let in more light. Light coming through the peripheral cornea may be out of focus if the pupil opens beyond the laser treatment area. This is why some patients are not good candidates for [LASIK](#) if they have very large pupils. However, our [advanced laser technology](#) has expanded treatment zones and patients that were at one time not candidates for LASIK because they had large pupils, can now be treated. [PRK](#) and [LASEK](#) may also be better procedures for patients with wide pupils.

Does LASIK cause dry eye?

Following a [LASIK](#) procedure, every patient has temporary [dry eye](#), which can be treated most often with artificial tears. This dry eye sensation usually clears up in eight to 12 weeks except in rare cases, where it may take longer.

Patients with pre-existing dry eye may not be good candidates for LASIK, but may be candidates for [PRK](#) or [LASEK](#). If you have dry eye, you should discuss it with your doctor at your pre-op examination. Tests can often diagnose dry eye but it is still somewhat difficult to predict who will experience significant dry eye following [LASIK](#). A thorough evaluation of your current medications, medical history and work environment should all be taken into account.

What keeps the flap in position?

Following your procedure, the flap stays in position without the need for stitches. Initially, there is a vacuum effect created by the cells lining the inner surface of the cornea. As the eye heals over the first few days, the epithelium (the outer surface of the cornea) seals the edges of the flap.

Will it hurt?

There is no pain during any of the laser vision procedures since anesthetic eye drops numb your eyes, although some patients may experience mild discomfort or a pressure sensation during their procedure after [LASIK](#), you might experience mild irritation for a few days after your procedure. An over-the-counter pain reliever or use of artificial tears will generally take care of this discomfort. [PRK](#) and [LASEK](#) patients experience more post-operative discomfort for three to five days while the epithelium heals.

Will both eyes be corrected on the same day?

For most procedures, both eyes will be corrected on the same day.

How long does the procedure take?

Since both eyes are usually treated during the same appointment, you will be in the surgery room for approximately 30 minutes. Once in the laser room your eyes will be

cleaned and prepared for surgery. The surgery itself usually only takes five minutes or so per eye.

Do I need to take time off work?

Following [LASIK](#), most patients return to work the day after their procedure. With [PRK](#) or [LASEK](#), the recovery time may be a little longer.

Do I have to go without my contacts before having laser vision correction?

If you are wearing hard or gas permeable contacts, it's important that you remove them at least three weeks prior to your exam. Soft lenses should be out for at least one week before your exam. Soft toric lenses may need to be out longer. Your doctor will advise you how long you need to be out of your contacts prior to your exam and prior to your surgery.

How old do I have to be for laser vision correction?

You need to be over 18 years of age, and your glasses or contact lens prescription should not have changed in the last year. If your eye is still changing from year to year, you should not have the procedure until the cornea is stable.

Can I have laser vision correction while I am pregnant or trying to conceive?

Pregnancy can affect your vision, therefore if you are pregnant or trying to conceive, you should not have laser vision correction. You should wait several months after your pregnancy or after you finish nursing before having laser vision correction.

How long will the results of the surgery last?

Laser vision correction is considered to be permanent. However, your eyes can still change as you age which may cause a need for glasses or contacts or additional vision correction procedures in the future. As people reach their early forties, they develop [presbyopia](#) and begin to need reading glasses. If you're over 35, you may want to consider [monovision](#).

If I choose to have monovision, does that mean I'll never need reading glasses?

Not necessarily. The effects of presbyopia continue to worsen as you get older, whether or not you have monovision. At some point in time, reading glasses or another vision correction procedure may become necessary. The benefit to having monovision is that there won't be a complete dependence on glasses for close vision. Many who have monovision are able to see well enough both at distance and near to do things at any age without corrective lenses.

How much should I pay for laser vision correction?

The cost of vision correction varies among practices, based on [surgeon experience](#) and what the center includes in the fee. We are not the least expensive providers because we never sacrifice safety to save you money. We have invested heavily in [advanced laser technology](#) and our diagnostic technology is second to none. This investment is extremely important to surgical results and our patients tell us they can see the difference.

It's only natural to want to get the best price, but remember, quality and service are *extremely* important when it comes to medical care. After all, laser vision correction is a procedure you'll have only once in your lifetime and your vision is one of your most important assets. The best way to find out exactly what your price will be is to come in for an exam. After a comprehensive evaluation to determine what procedures you're a candidate for and what degree of correction you need, we'll be able to give you a specific price.

Will my insurance cover my procedure?

A few insurance companies do pay for all or part of vision correction procedures. You can check with you plan administrator, or we will be happy to make a copy of your insurance card and check coverage for you. Many people have [medical flex plans](#) they use to save up to 50 percent on their procedure by using pre-tax dollars. Your employer's human resources department can tell you whether you have this benefit. Vision correction also may be tax deductible as a medical expense (check with your financial advisor).

If you do not have insurance coverage, we do offer affordable payment plans. It is easy to [apply online](#) and receive credit approval before you [schedule an appointment](#). We also accept cash, personal checks, Visa, MasterCard, and Discover.