

# LASIK Frequently Asked Questions



## **1. How do I determine if I am a candidate for laser vision correction?**

The ideal candidate for laser vision correction (LVC) is at least 18 years of age or older, with stable vision and healthy eyes. To determine if you're a candidate for the procedure, talk to your eye doctor or visit our office for a complimentary LASIK consultation. During your one-hour consultation, we perform specialized tests and a full dilated eye exam to confirm you're a candidate for the procedure.

## **2. Is LVC permanent?**

Yes, LVC results are a permanent change to the shape of the cornea. However, LVC will not prevent age-related conditions such as presbyopia (the need for reading glasses), cataracts, or possible future prescription changes. These conditions would still be treated in their normal manner.

## **3. Is LVC painful?**

Patients experience virtually no discomfort during the procedure. Eye drops are used to numb the eyes, so no needles or injections are required. After LASIK, post-operative discomfort is minimal. However, it is common to have some eye irritation for the first few hours.

## **4. What can I expect my vision to be after my procedure?**

Most of our patients say this is an extremely memorable moment in their lives, since most people will have improved vision immediately after your procedure. The results of LASIK have been overwhelmingly successful in eliminating or reducing the dependence on glasses or contact lenses. As with any surgical procedure, results cannot be guaranteed. In a recent Advanced CustomVue study, 96% of patients treated for nearsightedness and/or astigmatism reported 20/25 vision or better at the one-year post-operative visit.

Ultimately, how well a person sees and how quickly their vision improves depends on the degree of their prescription and their healing pattern. During the complimentary consultation, we will discuss the range of probable outcomes based on your prescription.

## **5. When can I return to work and normal activities?**

Most patients notice dramatic improvement within the first few days following the procedure and are able to drive a car and return to work within one to three days. The majority of LASIK patients see quite well the next day. However, the speed of visual recovery ultimately depends on personal healing patterns. After LASIK, the restriction on activities is minimal, and these will be covered in detail prior to the procedure.

## **6. What laser do you use?**

Joplin Eye Laser Center is the only practice in the four state area to proudly utilize the VISX STAR S4 IR™ Excimer Laser with ActiveTrak. This superior laser allows the opportunity to provide custom-tailored, individualized treatments called Advanced CustomVue. Just like a fingerprint, each person's vision is 100 percent unique to their eyes. Advanced CustomVue is an individualized LVC procedure that combines the WaveScan WaveFront™ System and the VISX STAR S4 IR™ Excimer Laser with Iris Registration (IR), enabling our doctors to measure unique imperfections in a person's vision and design an individualized treatment. The VISX laser is the only FDA-approved laser NASA uses to treat their astronauts.

Iris registration (IR) technology increases accuracy and precision by using unique characteristics of the iris to center the treatment correctly regardless of the pupil size. The Active Trak eye tracker compensates for the tiniest eye movements by continually guiding the laser beam to follow along with the patient's movements, allowing our patients better peace of mind.

## **7. Are both eyes treated the same day?**

Most patients who undergo LVC have the procedure on both eyes the same day. However, the procedure can be performed unilaterally as well.

## **8. Can LASIK eliminate the need for reading glasses?**

People over 40 years old gradually lose the ability to focus on near objects. This condition is called presbyopia and results from a loss of flexibility of the lens inside the eye, as well as other age-related changes.

To decrease the need for reading glasses, the technique of creating monovision may be helpful. With monovision, the doctor fully treats one eye (usually the dominant eye) for distance, and the other eye for near vision. Monovision is a slight compromise of both distance and near vision. We recommend a contact lens trial to confirm your decision.

## **9. What if I currently wear contact lenses?**

Prior to LVC, it is important that the curvature of the corneas return to their natural shape, which is achieved by discontinuing contact lens use. For most patients who wear soft contact lenses, the cornea will return to its natural shape within seven to ten days prior to testing. Patients who wear rigid or gas permeable lenses are generally required to discontinue contact lenses for thirty days.

## **10. What if an additional procedure is necessary?**

In general, the few patients who require an enhancement procedure will do so within the first few months following the procedure rather than years later. Within a year of original procedure, any enhancements needed for traditional LVC patients will be provided at the cost of the laser manufacturer's royalty fee, which is currently \$200 per eye for a traditional treatment or \$400 per eye for an Advanced CustomVue treatment if you choose to upgrade. If you initially had an Advanced CustomVue treatment, your enhancement fee is waived; however, if the procedure is performed outside of the year of original procedure, you're subject to pre-and post-operative care fees. After one year, traditional LVC patients are subject to the royalty fees in addition to pre- and post-operative care fees from JELC or your co-managing optometrist.

## **11. What are the long-term effects of LVC?**

LVC has been performed since 1987. The FDA has approved the use of the excimer laser and recognized LVC as being safe and effective for the treatment of nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism in eligible patients. In the United States alone, millions of procedures have been successfully performed. The first LVC patient ever treated was in the United States in 1987. That patient achieved 20/20 vision following treatment and still has 20/20 vision more than 20 years later. LVC has become the most commonly performed refractive surgery in the world, and most experts worldwide are confident that they will discover no long term concerns.

## **12. What are the risks of LVC?**

There is not a surgical procedure without risks. Long-term sight-threatening complications from LASIK are uncommon. The chance of having a serious vision-threatening complication is much less than 1%. Understanding potential risks allows you to make an informed decision before undergoing LVC. Our office will discuss potential risks in greater detail and answer any questions you may have during your consultation.

## **13. Does insurance cover LVC?**

Generally, LVC is considered elective and is not covered by many health insurance plans. However, some insurance companies offer a discount for the procedure and we're happy to contact your insurance carrier to determine if LVC is an included benefit. Cafeteria or flex spending plans are eligible for LVC. Also, our office offers flexible monthly payments to make LASIK more affordable.

## **14. How can I save tax dollars with LASIK?**

LASIK can be deducted as a medical expense on your taxes, if your medical expenses reach a certain percentage of your income in any given year. LASIK can also be purchased through a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), if provided by your employer.



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