



LASIK Changed My Life

by Emerson Que, M.D.

Frequently Asked Questions About Refractive Surgery

Q: How does the doctor determine if I am a candidate?

A: An appointment for an evaluation is scheduled. A series of measurements and tests are completed such as corneal measurements, refractions (glasses prescriptions), and a dilated exam. The doctor will review the results of all of the testing and determine if the patient is a candidate.

Q: What factors prevent me from being considered a candidate?

A: There are a few factors which prevent a patient from having refractive surgery. Most of these include pre-existing conditions; however, not all conditions are a contraindication. If a patient's corneas are too thin, it will prevent them from being a surgery candidate.

Q: If I had surgery on my eyes for other problems, does that mean that I will not be a candidate?

A: Other types of surgery are not necessarily a contraindication for refractive surgery. It all depends on the type of surgery performed.

Q: Are there different kinds of refractive surgery?

A: There are many different kinds of refractive surgery. The most common is LASIK, where a flap is made on the surface of the cornea and laser is used to reshape the cornea. The flap is then returned to its original position. Another type is PRK, which is very similar to LASIK. The biggest difference is that a flap is not made on the cornea.


Q: Will I still need glasses at all?

A: In many cases, the need for distance glasses is completely resolved. Patients who have "over-40 eyes" may still need reading glasses, but monovision (one eye corrected to see well in the distance, and one eye corrected to see well near) is possible.

Q: What is the recovery time?

A: Recovery time varies from patient to patient, depending upon their rate of healing and tolerance. IN MOST CASES, people are able to return to work the next day following LASIK.

Q: Does insurance cover refractive surgery?

A: Currently most insurance companies DO NOT cover refractive surgery. It is considered a "cosmetic" procedure. There are some vision-specific plans that do offer discounts. 

Dr. Emerson Que is a board certified Ophthalmologist in practice at the Azar Eye Institute, Salisbury, M.D.

Stacey Weisner, of The Salisbury Zoological Park, is a "regular" at Salisbury Area Chamber of Commerce events as a way to network with people who can help her help raise funds for the "Renew the Zoo" campaign. So, the irony was not lost as she fumbled for her glasses while checking in at a Business-After-Hours event at Azar Eye Institute (AEI) that the door prize was free LASIK surgery.

"When I heard that one of the door prizes was free LASIK surgery at AEI, I knew I would be one of the first in line for a chance to win," said Stacey, now an AEI patient. "One of the first people I met at the event that evening was Dr. Emerson Que. Little did I know he would be the doctor performing my LASIK surgery when my business card was picked as a winner."

Weisner has worn glasses since she was 7 years old. Without them, she can't see her own fingers in front of her face or a road sign off in the distance. Her prescription is so strong, she purposely pays extra for thin lenses to avoid having to wear thick bottle cap glasses.

"I knew it was bad when I was younger and couldn't even see the eye chart, let alone the symbols on it," said Stacey. "I tried contacts, but they were very uncomfortable. I later found out I couldn't wear them because I had astigmatism."

LASIK surgery, a form of refractive surgery, usually takes less than 30 minutes. Using a laser, Dr. Que created a flap on the surface of each of Stacey's corneas and then used a second laser to reshape each cornea. The flap is then returned to its original position. LASIK can be used to correct many types of issues including nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism.

Stacey looked into having LASIK surgery in 2004 but was told she wasn't a candidate because her cornea was too thin. New technology, including the all laser LASIK procedure, gave her another chance at the surgery.

"When I found out I was a candidate, it was like a dream come true," said Stacey. "The first thing I thought of was being able to swim in my pool with my grandchildren without worrying about wearing glasses."

Before LASIK surgery, Stacey had 20/1150 vision. Just three months after the procedure, her vision was measured at 20/20.

"It has truly changed my life," said Stacey. "My vision is actually better now than it was when I had my glasses on. I now see life like I've never seen it before."