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Refractive surgery can treat the following vision problems:

- Myopia (nearsightedness)
- Hyperopia (farsightedness)
- Astigmatism

Refractive surgery might be a good choice if you:

- Are 18 years old or older
- Have an appropriate refractive error that has been stable for more than one year
- Want to decrease your need for glasses or contacts
- Are free of eye disease
- Accept the risks and possible side effects of the surgery

There is no best method for correcting refractive errors. Talk with your ophthalmologist about your best options after an eye exam. Discuss your specific lifestyle and vision needs. Sometimes the best choice may be to stick with your glasses or contact lenses.

### PRK and LASIK: What's the difference?

PRK and LASIK are all laser eye surgeries that reshape the cornea to correct vision. The main difference between the procedures is how the cornea is accessed.

There are distinct pros and cons to each corrective eye procedure, and in certain scenarios, one procedure may be more effective or have greater advantages than the other.

#### PRK

- Initially, the cornea's outer layer, called the epithelium, is removed
- The cornea is then reshaped with a laser
- The epithelium is allowed to heal and regenerate naturally
- Considered the first generation of laser vision correction surgery

#### LASIK

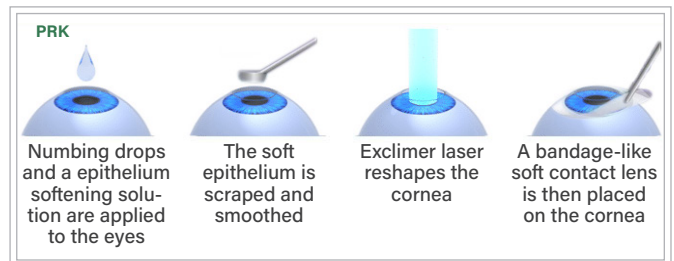
- Initially, a flap is created in the cornea
- The flap is then lifted and the cornea is reshaped with a laser
- The flap is then repositioned
- Has a quick recovery time and high rate of success

### WHAT HAPPENS DURING PRK?

PRK is usually done in an outpatient surgery center. The procedure usually takes about 15 minutes.

The eye is anesthetized with topical drops and a lid retainer is placed to hold the eyelids back. Then the outer layer of cells on your cornea, called the epithelium, is removed. You then will be asked to look at a target light so that your eyes will not move and your cornea will be reshaped using a laser. A contact lens is then placed on the eye to help the front layer of the eye heal.

There is usually no discomfort with the treatment itself, but there may be mild to moderate discomfort for two to three days following the PRK, because of the healing taking place on the outer layer of the cornea. This is usually controlled with topical and oral medications.



### WHAT HAPPENS DURING LASIK?

LASIK is usually performed as an outpatient procedure using topical anesthesia with drops. The process itself generally takes about 15 minutes. The surgeon creates a flap in the cornea with a laser. The flap is lifted to the side, and a different laser is used to reshape the cornea. The flap is then placed back in its normal position.

A shield or goggles protects the flap for the first day and night. The vision will often be clear by the next day. Healing after surgery is often less uncomfortable than with PRK since the laser removes tissue from the inside of the cornea and not the surface.

