



Frequently Asked Questions

How is the surgery performed?

A surgeon utilizes the Excimer laser to perform the treatment. The cool light of the laser beam vaporizes corneal tissue, reshaping the surface and enabling the patient to see clearly without the need for glasses or contact lenses. The anesthetic is administered by eyedrop, there are no needles involved.

What kind of laser is it?

LASIK and PRK are performed with an Excimer laser, VISX® Star S4 with Active Trak™, Iris Registration and CustomVue™ Excimer Laser System. We utilize state of the art equipment in our facility.

What is the difference between LASIK and PRK?

The LASIK procedure heals quicker and usually provides comfort and vision within a 12-24 hour period after surgery. LASIK is a more intense procedure for the patient than PRK, as an ocular ring is applied to the eye creating pressure for a few seconds. The complication rate is lower than that of PRK (less medication, virtually no haze, less down time for the patient), but if a complication were to occur within the corneal flap, it may be more serious than the complications of PRK alone. PRK is a less intense surgical procedure and has been very widely carried out. It requires a contact bandage lens on the eye for approximately 3 days while the corneal layer heals. Healing time with PRK can be 3 months and an eye drop regime of 3 months is required. If re-treatment is needed, the whole process is repeated.

How long does the procedure take?

Preparation for surgery is done at the Eye Institute at Catholic Medical Center on the day of the treatment and takes approximately one (1) hour prior to surgery time. The actual surgery is relatively short and the amount of time the laser is active on the eye is usually a minute or less. Your total time at the Eye Institute is approximately 2 hours. This includes the preparation, surgical and post-operative evaluation time.

Can I drive immediately after surgery?

On the day of the surgery, you must have someone with you or make alternate transportation plans for driving home. You cannot drive for the first day.

Does it hurt?

The procedure itself is painless. With LASIK, you may experience a pressure sensation when the flap is created and some discomfort or irritation for up to 24 hours after surgery. There may be some mild discomfort the first day, but most patients have no discomfort at all. With PRK, you may experience irritation for one week or more after surgery. There is no pain during the procedure.

Who can have Laser Vision Correction?

If you are considering laser vision correction for nearsightedness with or without astigmatism or farsightedness with or without astigmatism, you must be at least 18 years old, with healthy eyes and stable vision.

What results can I expect?

During US clinical studies, 94 percent of patients achieved results of 20/40 or better (sufficient vision to obtain a driver's license without restrictions in most states). No surgical procedure can be guaranteed, but our patients have achieved excellent results. The outcome depends on the degree of pre-operative correction. The Eye Institute's outcome statistics demonstrates that 100% of our patients see 20/25 or better within 6 months of the surgery. Should you need an additional treatment, this will be covered at no extra cost within 12 months of the original surgery.

One year after the CustomVue procedure, patients in a clinical study reported these results without glasses or contact lenses: 100% could pass a driving test; 98% could see 20/20 or better and 70% could see better than 20/20.

Is Laser Vision Correction safe?

Hundreds of thousands of patients have had this treatment performed on them successfully; the FDA has approved laser correction of nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism (and now mixed astigmatism, as well) and found the treatment safe and effective for eligible patients. Based on patient data obtained for FDA approval, all patients experienced a significant improvement in uncorrected vision (vision without glasses or contact lenses) after laser vision correction.

Is Laser Vision Correction permanent?

Yes. Our original laser vision correction patients from the early 1990's are still seeing well and we do not expect their vision to change. Some patients may require a re-treatment due to individual healing and initial corrections. For those with high prescriptions, the chance of needing a re-treatment is greater. Studies show that the results of the surgery will not lose its effectiveness over time. One thing we cannot correct is the need for reading glasses (presbyopia), as this condition has to do with the lens inside the eye and is part of the natural aging process. This procedure does not change the normal course of nature. Should you be genetically predisposed to cataracts or glaucoma, this procedure neither promotes nor deters when this would normally happen.

When can I go back to work?

It varies. We ask you to take time off the day after the surgery for your initial post-operative evaluation with your surgeon in his/her office. Most people then return to work. People usually have functional vision within the first 24-48 hours after the LASIK operation, however, temporary blurred vision is common. Functional vision with the PRK procedure is normally present within a one to two week period.

Will I need to wear a patch?

No. You will, however, need to use eye drops and wear clear plastic shields when sleeping for eye protection for at least a week.

Can I correct both eyes at once?

Depending on the procedure, both eyes are usually done together. Most patients find it more convenient to have both eyes treated at the same time, however, should a patient request to have them done separately, this certainly can be accommodated.

Will the surgery correct my astigmatism?

Yes, along with your nearsightedness or farsightedness.

What is CustomVue™?

Just like a fingerprint, each person's vision is 100 percent unique to their eyes. VISX® CustomVue™ can measure and address the unique imperfections of each person's vision and provide them with the potential to experience better vision than is possible with glasses or contact lenses.

WaveScan WaveFront technology was originally developed for use in high-powered telescopes to reduce distortions when viewing distant objects in space. Using this technology, your doctor can detect and measure the optical distortions unique to your entire optical system.

The WaveScan system compares the reflected wavefronts with the original unaltered wavefront. This produces a fingerprint of your vision or WavePrint™ map. This information is then transferred to the VISX STAR S4™ excimer laser and is used as a guide to reshape the cornea during your laser vision treatment.

For more information about the Eye Institute, please call **603.663.2020** or e-mail **eyeinstitute@cmc-nh.org**.