

REFRACTIVE EYE SURGERY (LASER EYE SURGERY & LENS SURGERY)

- Surgery to improve your eyesight, making you less dependent on glasses or contact lenses, is known as refractive surgery.
- There are two different types; **laser eye surgery** and **lens surgery**, and both are safe and effective.
- The type of surgery that will suit you best depends on your eyesight, eye health, age, budget and lifestyle.
- Your surgeon will examine your eyes, assess your needs and help you to decide on the best option for you.
- Refractive surgery is not covered by your medical aid, and the costs depend on the kind of surgery you decide on.

LASER EYE SURGERY

Laser eye surgery or laser vision correction involves using a laser to reshape the front surface (cornea) of your eyes, so that you can focus better. It can correct near-sightedness, far-sightedness and astigmatism.

Who is suitable for laser eye surgery?

- Laser eye surgery is suitable for people over 21 years of age.
- Your spectacle/contact lens prescription should be stable (more or less the same for 2 years).

**Lens surgery may be more suitable if you have a high spectacle prescription or are older.*

What does it involve?

Our practice performs two types of laser eye surgery:

- **LASIK (laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis)**
A thin flap is created to open the cornea and then a laser is used to reshape the cornea underneath. The flap is then smoothed back over the cornea and stays in place without stitches.
- **TransPRK (transepithelial photorefractive keratectomy)**
The cornea is reshaped with a laser without creating a flap.

Both types of lasers have similar results, and your surgeon will discuss your options and help you decide on best procedure for you.

Are there any risks?

- Severe vision loss is very rare.
- These laser procedures are not perfect, and approximately 1 in 10 people who have laser eye surgery will need repeat surgery (enhancement) to get the best possible results. There are a multitude of factors responsible for this. These re-treatments or enhancements are part of an inclusive laser surgery fee; you will therefore not be charged for these enhancement procedures within a specified period of your initial procedure (2 years).

Common side effects include:

- Mild gritty discomfort – artificial tears will help, and this will improve and possibly resolve over time (months).

- Visual disturbances; such as glare from oncoming headlights when driving at night – this usually resolves.

LENS SURGERY

There are two main types of lens surgery:

1. Phakic intraocular lens implantation (PIOL)

Artificial lenses are placed in your eyes without removing your own natural lenses; like having contact lenses placed inside your eyes.

Who is suitable for this?

This is a good option for younger people who cannot have laser eye surgery, perhaps because they have a very high eye prescription or a cornea that is too thin for laser.

2. Refractive lens exchange (RLE)

This is basically the same as cataract surgery; the natural lens of the eye is removed and replaced by an artificial lens.

Who is suitable for this?

This is a good option if you are not suitable for laser eye surgery; perhaps because you have a high eye prescription or the early lens changes (cataract).

What does RLE involve?

Your natural lens is removed and replaced with an artificial lens; this intraocular lens (IOL) can be monofocal, multifocal and/or toric.

Monofocal - these lenses improve your distance vision, but you will still need to wear glasses for near work.

Multifocal – these lenses offer clear distance, middle and near vision. About 1% of people find that they cannot get used to them, and opt for another operation to exchange the lens.

Toric - these lenses correct astigmatism and can be incorporated into monofocal or multifocal lenses.

Are there any risks?

- Severe vision loss is very rare.
- Serious complications are rare and if you do have any problems after surgery, they can usually be corrected.

Common side effects include:

- Mild gritty discomfort – artificial tears will help, and this will improve and possibly resolve over time (months).
- Visual disturbances; such as glare from oncoming headlights when driving at night – this usually resolves.