

FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is Blade-Free LASIK?

A: LASIK (Laser Assisted In-Situ Keratomileusis) with the IntraLase Method™ is a 100 percent blade-free approach using the IntraLase® FS laser to complete the first step of the LASIK procedure. It is the first advancement to make LASIK an all-laser procedure.

Noted for improving the safety and predictability of the LASIK procedure by replacing the hand-held oscillating microkeratome blade historically used in the first step, the IntraLase laser has also been shown to provide better than 20/20 visual outcomes, even among Custom/Wavefront patients. Today, the IntraLase laser is the technology of choice among the nation's leading LASIK surgeons and ophthalmic teaching institutions.

Q: Why does LASIK require two steps?

A: When laser vision correction was performed without the corneal flap, as in PRK (photorefractive keratotomy), patients experienced considerable discomfort and a delay in visual acuity. So in LASIK, the surgeon first creates a micro-thin flap of corneal tissue and folds it back to prepare the eye for the second step, where an excimer laser is used on the inner cornea to correct vision. This two-step process allows for rapid visual recovery with little or no patient discomfort, and is credited with the popularity and growth of the procedure worldwide.

Q: How does the corneal flap affect visual outcomes?

A: Clinical studies reveal that the corneal flap has been widely underestimated for its affect on the visual outcome of the LASIK procedure. If the corneal surface is left with microscopic high and low spots, the precision of the excimer tissue ablation (step two) can be compromised. Eliminating even minute inaccuracies on the corneal surface improves the visual outcome of the procedure.

Surgeons have found statistically and clinically significant differences in the vision patients achieve when the IntraLase laser is used for corneal flap creation. The IntraLase FS laser goes beyond simply creating a planar flap to preparing an optimal corneal architecture below the flap, providing for superior visual outcomes, even among Custom/Wavefront patients. The end result: fewer complications and better vision.

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Q: How do the visual outcomes of blade-free LASIK with the IntraLase Method compare to traditional blade-initiated LASIK?

A: Clinical studies confirm that patients achieve better vision with LASIK with the IntraLase Method. Data show:

- More patients achieve 20/20 or better vision with the IntraLase Method.
- Patients stating a preference prefer the post-operative vision of their IntraLase Method eye 3-to-1 over their blade-treated eye.
- The IntraLase Method creates fewer high- and low-order aberrations, associated with night glare and halos.
- IntraLase Method patients have a reduced incidence of post-operative dry eye symptoms.
- IntraLase Method patients require fewer enhancement procedures following LASIK.

The precision of the IntraLase flap significantly reduces the incidence of post-operative induced astigmatism as compared to a microkeratome-created flap.

Q: Is LASIK with the IntraLase Method the same as the Customized procedure I have heard so much about?

A: No. Custom LASIK generally refers to individualized visual diagnosis with technology called “wavefront,” which allows for customized, personalized treatment with the excimer laser. However, many LASIK surgeons combine Custom treatments and IntraLase.

In fact, new data reveals that the IntraLase laser helps Custom LASIK deliver on its promise of better visual outcomes beyond 20/20 to 20/15 and 20/12.5.

Q: Are the IntraLase Method benefits only achievable with Custom procedures?

A: No. IntraLase Method improves the precision and visual results of LASIK, whether you choose a standard or Custom procedure.

Q: Is traditional LASIK unsafe?

A: No. While traditional LASIK is a successful and relatively safe procedure, the IntraLase laser makes it safer by virtually eliminating almost all of the most severe, sight-threatening complications of the microkeratome. LASIK using the IntraLase Method is not only more accurate, but it also provides patients with superior visual outcomes. These facts are giving thousands of patients each month the confidence to proceed with laser vision correction.

Q: What about side effects such as transient light sensitivity and inflammation?

A: The incidence of transient light sensitivity (photophobia) following LASIK is less than 2%. On the rare occasion that this side effect is reported, while a nuisance, it does not affect visual acuity and typically resolves with steroid eye drops. With recent improvements to the IntraLase FS laser, this incidence rate is further reduced.

Q: I have seen several advertisements for “All-Laser LASIK.” Is this IntraLase?

A: Maybe. Contrary to popular belief, LASIK is not an “all-laser” procedure, due to the use of the microkeratome blade. In the U.S. IntraLase offers the only laser technology available today for use in the first step of the LASIK procedure and only LASIK procedures that use the IntraLase Method can be considered “all-laser” or “blade-free.”

Your doctor can explain the difference between other procedures that may be advertised as “all laser,” such as LASEK, PRK or epi-LASIK – all of which are surface ablation procedures.

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Because they are performed without creating a corneal flap, these procedures generally require longer healing time and frequently involve more discomfort and a delay in visual recovery.

Q: Is IntraLase more expensive?

A: Yes. Most patients agree that the added level of safety and better vision offered by IntraLase is worth the incremental cost. IntraLase surgeons are leaders in the field of ophthalmology who continually evaluate advances in technology. They've determined that the IntraLase laser is the most sophisticated and accurate system available today for flap creation and have invested in the technology to sustain their superiority in patient care.

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