

GENERAL INFORMATION

# LASER EYE SURGERY



# WHAT IS LASER EYE SURGERY?

**Laser eye surgery is a form of vision correction that involves using a cool-temperature laser to reshape the cornea to correct a refractive error. A refractive error occurs when the eye is abnormally shaped and can't focus light directly on the retina at the back of the eye, resulting in out-of-focus, blurry vision.**

Examples of refractive error include short-sightedness (myopia), long-sightedness (hyperopia), age-related long-sightedness (presbyopia) and astigmatism. Laser eye surgery is an alternative option to prescription glasses and/or contact lenses.

Laser eye surgery is also referred to as refractive surgery.

## Who can have laser eye surgery?

If you meet the following basic criteria, you may be eligible for laser eye surgery. You will need a consultation with a surgeon to confirm your eligibility.

<b>Age</b>	Between 18 and 55 years old
<b>Vision problem</b>	Short-sightedness, long-sightedness and/or astigmatism
<b>Stable vision</b>	Glasses prescription has remained the same for at least 12 months
<b>General eye health</b>	Healthy with no history of eye problems or serious eye injury
<b>General health</b>	Good, not pregnant or breastfeeding

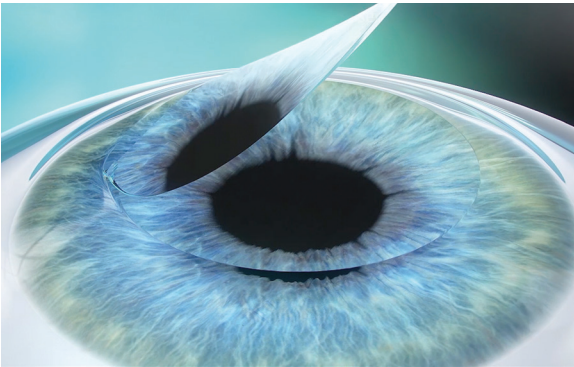


# WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF LASER EYE SURGERY?

## LASIK

This is a two-step vision correction procedure. The surgeon uses a femtosecond laser to create a flap in the top layer of the cornea (the epithelium and stroma), exposing the tissue bed underneath. An excimer laser is then used to precisely reshape the corneal tissue bed to correct the patient's refractive error. Finally, the surgeon places the corneal flap back in its original position.

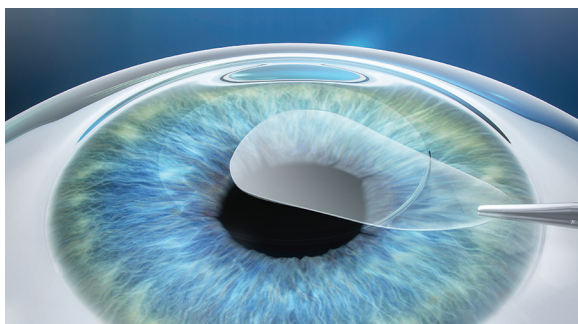
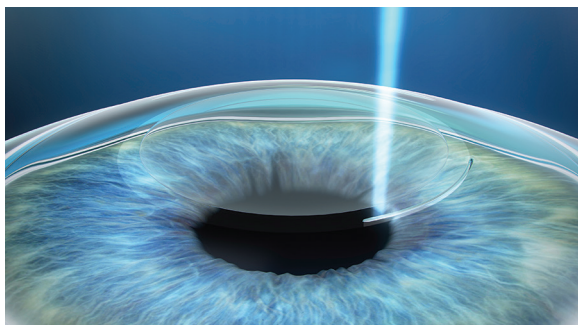
Because the flap adheres to the corneal bed, the healing process begins immediately. The eye has a remarkable ability to heal itself and patients are able to return to most of their daily activities the next day.



## SMILE® pro

SMILE pro is a one-step, one-laser procedure using minimally invasive, keyhole surgery – the laser makes a tiny 3 mm incision and then creates a disc (lenticule) of corneal tissue. This disc is then removed to reshape the cornea and correct the refractive error. Since no flap was created, the top layer of the cornea is essentially intact.

Certain patients may be better suited to SMILE pro laser surgery, including people with a high degree of short-sightedness, athletes who play contact sports and people at a higher risk of developing dry eye.



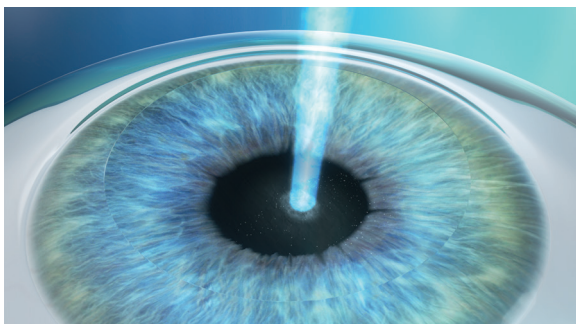


## ASLA

The traditional ASLA (or PRK) technique uses a topical solution to soften the top layer of corneal cells, allowing them to be gently removed. The excimer laser is then used to reshape the exposed corneal tissue bed to correct the patient's refractive error.

For transPRK ('no touch' PRK), the surgeon uses the excimer laser to perform both steps (i.e. remove the top layer of cells and reshape the cornea). Once the procedure is complete, a 'bandage' contact lens is placed on top of the eye for four to five days to aid the healing process.

ASLA is generally the procedure of choice for patients who have thin or unusual corneas.



## MONOVISION/BLENDED VISION

This procedure involves correcting one eye (usually the dominant one) for distance vision and the other eye for reading/near vision. When looking into the distance, your brain pays more attention to the eye that is focused for distance and vice versa when looking at close objects (i.e. your brain relies more on the eye that is focused for near distance). Overall, the images from both eyes are processed by your brain as one blended image.

Monovision can be achieved using laser eye surgery (e.g. LASIK, SMILE pro or ASLA) or artificial lenses (e.g. replacement lenses or implantable phakic lenses).

Before having surgery, patients typically complete a contact lens trial to make sure they are comfortable adapting to the visual change.

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# WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR HAVING LASER EYE SURGERY?

## Suitability assessment (optional)

We offer a free assessment with one of our optometrists or orthoptists to perform some key tests and determine if your prescription falls within the treatable range for laser eye surgery. You may then choose to proceed with a comprehensive consultation with one of our laser eye surgeons (see 'The pre-surgical consultation' below).

## The pre-surgical consultation

You will undergo comprehensive eye testing and examination to confirm your eligibility for laser eye surgery and which procedure is recommended for you. Let the surgeon know of any eye-related or general health issues at this consultation.

It is also an opportunity to ask any questions about the procedure and clarify your expectations. Please note the surgical consultation incurs a fee, but a Medicare rebate is available if you have a referral from a GP or optometrist. There is no obligation to proceed with surgery if you decide it isn't the right option for you.





## The surgery

Your procedure will be performed in one of Vision Eye Institute's fully equipped, state-of-the-art laser suites. You'll be in the clinic for around two hours in total (including admission, preparation and recovery time).

### THE PROCEDURE ITSELF TAKES AROUND 10 TO 20 MINUTES.

Immediately before your procedure, you will receive anaesthetic (numbing) eye drops and anti-inflammatory eye drops.

Patients can also choose to have an oral sedative to help them relax. After allowing the sedative to take effect (around 30 to 45 minutes), you will be taken into the laser suite and asked to lie down on a surgical bed for the procedure to take place.

The procedure itself will vary depending on which type of surgery is being performed (e.g. whether one or two lasers are used).

## After surgery

Following laser eye surgery, you will be:

- Discharged and asked to rest for the remainder of the day
- Scheduled for a follow-up appointment later that day or the next day
- Given medicated eye drops to use
- Advised to avoid certain activities for the first few days or weeks (depending on the procedure performed).

## Enhancement procedures

The majority of laser eye surgery procedures produce excellent outcomes. However, there may be occasions when a second (enhancement) procedure is required to optimise the visual result. The success of laser vision correction depends on a number of factors, including the health of the cornea, type and degree of refractive error, and age of the patient.

Enhancement procedures tend to be quicker than the original procedure, as only minor corneal reshaping with the laser is required. At Vision Eye Institute, enhancement procedures are free of charge for up to two years from the date of the original surgery. Please note that included enhancements are not an industry standard.



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**WHEN COMPARING LASER VISION CORRECTION WITH A LIFETIME OF GLASSES OR CONTACT LENSES, YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED TO FIND OUT WHICH IS THE MORE COST-EFFECTIVE OPTION.**





# HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

As a rough guide, laser eye surgery can cost between \$2400 to \$3950 per eye.

## What's included in the cost?

After an initial assessment at a Vision Eye Institute clinic, you will receive a detailed quote for your laser eye surgery procedure. All of our costs are transparent. Our price includes surgeon and laser/theatre fees, post-operative medications as required for the first four to six weeks, post-operative consultations for six months, and any recommended enhancements within two years from the initial surgery.

Some providers do not include all charges that you will incur before, during and after your laser eye surgery procedure (including enhancement or follow-up procedures) in their quotes. Make sure you know what is included in the quote when comparing costs between providers. Costs may also vary between providers depending on the type of laser eye surgery and the laser technology they use, as well as the surgeon's experience.

## Is it covered by Medicare or health insurance?

Medicare does not rebate any of the cost of laser eye surgery, apart from some of the pre-surgical consultation. Some health insurers do offer a rebate. For example, BUPA Ultimate Health and Medibank Gold Ultra Health members receive 100% cover for laser eye surgery (36-month waiting period; lifetime limits may apply). It's best to check your level of cover, and any terms and conditions, with your insurer.

## Medibank members' offer

Medibank members with selected extras and packaged covers can receive 15% off surgical fees if they have their procedure performed at Vision Eye Institute (no waiting period applies; excludes consultation fees and diagnostic tests; pending health fund eligibility check).

## Payment options

We offer buy now, pay later (BNPL) and interest free payment plans in partnership with humm and Gem Visa. (subject to approval). Before applying for any form of credit, always read the full terms and conditions.

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# WHY SHOULD I CHOOSE VISION EYE INSTITUTE?

**Our mission is to remain at the forefront of technology and clinical research to ensure the best outcomes for our patients. As the largest private provider of ophthalmic services in Australia, we are able to ensure that our clinics are equipped with the latest state-of-the-art technology.**

Vision Eye Institute laser eye surgeons are some of the most experienced in Australia. Through their participation in international trials, presentations at conferences and involvement in teaching, our surgeons stay at the cutting edge of laser eye surgery. In fact, our surgeons have been among the first to perform laser eye procedures, including ASLA, LASIK and SMILE pro in Australia.

Because we offer a comprehensive range of vision correction procedures, we can tailor a vision correction option to each patient. This includes offering a range of non-laser vision correction techniques if you are not suitable for laser eye surgery, such as refractive lens exchange and implantable contact lenses. After a comprehensive examination, our surgeons will recommend the vision correction procedure that will give you the best possible visual outcome.



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# Common FAQs

## Is laser eye surgery safe?

For people who meet the suitability criteria, laser eye surgery is one of the safest elective surgical procedures available today. However, it is not completely risk free.

It is important that you choose a reputable surgeon who will advise you if you are not a suitable candidate.

Laser eye surgery has been available for over 30 years now, so it is very well established. Advances in the laser technology continue to reduce the risk of side-effects or complications.

## Is one procedure better than the others?

Studies investigating LASIK, ASLA and SMILE pro have found that all procedures have comparable safety and effectiveness at correcting refractive errors (efficacy).

Your surgeon will determine the procedure that will be the most safe and effective for your eyes. Ultimately, all procedures aim to achieve the same result of correcting your refractive error and restoring clear vision.

## Do I still need glasses or contacts after laser eye surgery?

Many people can get rid of their glasses or contacts after laser eye surgery, but some people with a high prescription may still need these after the procedure (though the prescription will be much weaker).

Laser eye surgery permanently changes your cornea, but doesn't protect your eyes from the lens-related vision changes that occur with age (presbyopia), so reading glasses may still be required when you reach your mid-40s.

### REFERENCES

1. Wilkinson JM et al. Refractive eye surgery: helping patients make informed decisions about LASIK. *Am Fam Physician* 2017;95(10):637–644.
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4. Ang M et al. Refractive surgery beyond 2020. *Eye (Lond)* 2021;35(2):362–382.

# COMPREHENSIVE EYE CARE



To access our full range of brochures online, use the QR code above

Vision Eye Institute is the largest private provider of ophthalmic services in Australia. Our team of highly regarded doctors includes general ophthalmologists as well as those who specialise in specific areas/conditions of the eye.

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GLAUCOMA		DIABETIC EYE DISEASE	
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PTERYGIUM		CORNEAL TRANSPLANTATION	
CORNEAL CONDITIONS		NERVE-RELATED VISION PROBLEMS	
RECONSTRUCTIVE EYE SURGERY		CHILDREN'S EYE HEALTH	
GENERAL EYE HEALTH			

## OUR LASER EYE SURGERY CLINICS

For more information or to find a Vision Eye Institute clinic that offers laser eye surgery, visit:

[visioneyeinstitute.com.au/services/laser-eye-surgery](http://visioneyeinstitute.com.au/services/laser-eye-surgery)

This information is general in nature. All medical and surgical procedures have potential benefits and risks. Consult your ophthalmologist for specific medical advice.



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Transforming lives. That's our vision.