

LASER EYE SURGERY

WILL I NEED GLASSES OR CONTACTS AFTER SURGERY?

Blurry or out-of-focus vision is most commonly caused by a mismatch between the power of your cornea and the length of your eye. During laser eye surgery, a cool-temperature laser is used to reshape the cornea so that it matches the rest of your eye.

Laser eye surgery usually corrects your distance (far) vision to match or better vision with your best pair of glasses or contacts prior to surgery.

However, the chances of you no longer needing glasses or contact lenses after your surgery depends on a number of important factors, which are outlined below.

Prescription strength and refractive error type

One of the key eligibility criteria for laser eye surgery is a stable glasses prescription that has not changed for at least 12 months. This is a good indicator that your vision is unlikely to deteriorate after surgery.

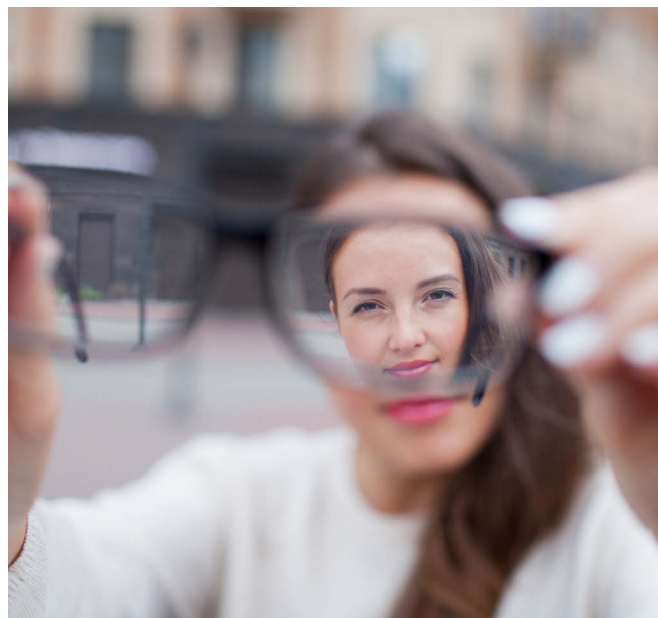
People with weaker prescriptions (i.e. lower refractive errors) usually stabilise in their late teens or early 20s, making them good candidates for laser eye surgery. In contrast, those with poorer eyesight (i.e. higher refractive errors) tend to have fewer prescription changes throughout their 20s, but may not stabilise completely.

Occasionally, some people find that their eyesight improves after laser eye surgery and then declines over time due to a further lengthening of the eye or changes to the lens. In these situations, vision can be corrected with an enhancement procedure, or a lens-based procedure if you are over 50 years old. However, a decline in vision usually tends to occur in those with very poor eyesight prior to surgery, and only a very small number of patients require an enhancement procedure.

Surgical experience and technology

An experienced surgeon will undertake a comprehensive evaluation to understand your eyes *and* lifestyle before recommending any type of laser eye surgery.

If you are not a suitable candidate for laser eye surgery, your surgeon may be able to recommend a different type of vision



correction procedure, such as refractive lens exchange or implantable contact lenses. In some people, surgical vision correction may not be a suitable treatment option.

Effects of ageing

If you have laser eye surgery at a young age, you may begin to experience difficulty with your reading vision after your mid-40s. This is a natural change, known as presbyopia, which is due to a stiffening of the lens as your eye ages. Treatments for presbyopia are available.

Personal goals and expectations

Keep in mind that laser eye surgery results can depend on your individual characteristics and preferences. If you are under 40, you can *generally* expect to no longer need your glasses or contact lenses after surgery.

If you are over 40, or have other contributing factors, such as those outlined in this article, your surgeon will talk to you in detail about what is achievable. Ask as many questions as possible and be honest about your expectations to help ensure that your treatment goals are realistic.

All medical and surgical procedures have potential complications. Check with your doctor before proceeding.