



SMILE: AN ALTERNATIVE TO LASIK REPORT #2886

BACKGROUND: In eyes with normal vision, the cornea bends, or refracts, light precisely onto the retina at the back of the eye. With nearsightedness (myopia), farsightedness (hyperopia) or astigmatism, the light is bent incorrectly, resulting in blurred vision. Your vision can be corrected with glasses or contact lenses but reshaping the cornea itself will also provide the necessary refraction. Laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis, or LASIK, can be an alternative to glasses or contact lenses. During LASIK surgery, a special type of cutting laser is used to precisely change the shape of the dome-shaped clear tissue at the front of your eye known as the cornea to improve vision. LASIK eye surgery is the best known and most performed laser refractive surgery to correct vision problems.

(Source: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/lasik-eye-surgery/about/pac-20384774>)

RISKS OF LASIK: Complications that result in a loss of vision are very rare, but there are side effects of LASIK that can be common and usually clear up after a few weeks or months. LASIK surgery causes a temporary decrease in tear production. For the first six months or so after surgery, your eyes may feel unusually dry as they heal. You may have difficulty seeing at night after surgery, which usually lasts a few days to a few weeks. You might notice increased light sensitivity, glare, halos around bright lights, or double vision. If the laser removes too little tissue from the eye, you won't get the clearer vision results you were hoping for. It's also possible that the laser will remove too much tissue from the eye. Astigmatism can be caused by uneven tissue removal. It may require additional surgery, glasses or contact lenses. Folding back or removing the flap from the front of your eye during surgery can cause complications, including infection and excess tears. And possibly regression, which is when vision slowly changes back toward your original prescription.

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NEW TREATMENT: SMILE: Small incision lenticule extraction, or SMILE, is a newer type of laser refractive surgery that uses a laser to treat myopia (nearsightedness) and astigmatism (irregularly shaped cornea). The ophthalmologist uses the laser to change the shape of the cornea which improves the way light rays are focused on the retina. SMILE is FDA-approved to treat mild nearsightedness and astigmatism and may reduce the need for eyeglasses or contact lenses. In some cases, it may even allow you to do without them completely. This treatment does carry risks of problems or complications that can include glare and halos around lights, particularly at night; debris where the corneal disc was removed; inflammation within the treated area; infection; and retreatment which must be done with surface PRK. However, most complications can be treated without any loss of vision. "SMILE does not replace LASIK, but it is an alternative for patients who have thinner corneas, dry eye conditions, and people with careers that are at risk for eye trauma," says Dr. Asim Piracha, a refractive specialist and medical director at John-Kenyon in Louisville, Kentucky.

(Source: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/treatments/what-is-small-incision-lenticule-extraction>)

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