

## Questions to Ask Your Potential Surgeon

The following is a list of questions you may want to have answered before choosing a doctor to perform your LASIK procedure. To better understand the procedure, you may first want to read *Before, During, After* in the February issue of *HealthHints*.

### Questions for the surgeon:

- How many eyes have you performed LASIK surgery on with the same laser? (Note: There is a learning curve<sup>1</sup> among surgeons in doing particular procedures and using particular devices.)
- How many laser procedures do you perform each month?<sup>2</sup>
- Do you use an [FDA-approved laser](#) for the procedure I need?
- What laser do you use?<sup>2</sup>
- Do you use each microkeratome blade only once?<sup>3</sup>
- What type of testing will you do to determine whether I'm a candidate for LASIK?
- What diagnostic test will you perform to check for dry eyes?
- How will you measure my pupils?<sup>2</sup>
- How do you check to see if my contact lenses have changed the shape of my cornea?
- If my cornea has changed shape, what will indicate that I am ready for surgery?
- What other diagnostic tests will you perform pre-operatively?<sup>2</sup>
- What percentage of patients do you reject for the LASIK procedure?<sup>2</sup>
- Has my prescription for glasses or contact lens been consistent for at least two years?
- Does my nearsightedness, farsightedness, or astigmatism fall within the accepted levels established for surgery by the FDA?
- Are my corneas thick enough to perform LASIK surgery?
- Do I have cataracts, glaucoma, or other corneal diseases?
- Are my corneas scarred?
- Do I have any diseases that would affect the outcome of the surgery or my ability to heal properly?
- Are there any other reasons why I may not be a candidate for LASIK surgery?
- What is your complication rate?<sup>2</sup>
- Am I at risk for complications?
- What can I expect during the procedure?
- What outcome can I expect from the surgery?<sup>4</sup>



- Are all pre-operative and post-operative visits included in the cost of the initial procedure, or will additional charges for pre-operative and post-operative visits apply?
- Can I choose the surgeon who will be operating on my eyes in advance, or will a surgeon be assigned to me the day of surgery?
- Who will be providing post-operative care?
- In the event of a complication, who would be providing emergency care?<sup>5</sup>
- In the event I have questions regarding my healing, who do I go to for answers?
- In the event I have questions regarding my outcomes, who do I go to for answers?
- What are the outcomes you are achieving?
- How many eyes that you have treated have lost two or more line of best corrected visual acuity, and were there any unusual circumstances?
- Has anyone on your staff had the surgery, and are they available to answer questions? Do you provide a list of patients I can contact?
- May I observe a surgery?<sup>2</sup>

### Note the following during your discussion:

- Is the doctor willing to spend the time to answer all of your questions?
- Does the doctor encourage follow-up and management of you as a patient? (Your pre-operative and post-operative care may be provided by a doctor other than the surgeon.)
- Do you feel that you know the doctor and are comfortable with an equal exchange of information?<sup>11</sup> In other words, are you at ease giving and getting information with this doctor?<sup>8</sup>
- Ask the doctor for the patient handbook on the procedure and laser that would be used for your surgery. Once you decide on a doctor and the exact procedure, you will want to carefully read the informed consent forms as well.

### Sources:

1. Eye Surgery Education Council (2007). Risks and complications [on-line]. Retrieved September 17, 2007. From [http://www.lasikinstitute.org/Surgeon\\_Questions.html](http://www.lasikinstitute.org/Surgeon_Questions.html).
2. Eye Surgery Education Council (2007). Tough questions for your doctor [on-line]. Retrieved September 17, 2007. From [http://www.lasikinstitute.org/Surgeon\\_Questions.html](http://www.lasikinstitute.org/Surgeon_Questions.html).
3. U.S. Food and Drug Administration (2007). LASIK surgery checklist [on-line]. Retrieved September 10, 2007. From <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/lasik/reduce.htm>.
4. Steinert RF, Kock DD, Lane SS, Stulting RD (2007). LASIK surgery screening guidelines for patients [on-line]. Retrieved September 10, 2007. From <http://www.lasikinstitute.org/eligibility.html>.
5. Eye Surgery Education Council (2007). Cost: Price of an initial procedure [on-line]. Retrieved September 10, 2007. From <http://www.lasikinstitute.org/Cost.html>.



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