

# LASIK Laser Vision Correction - UPDATE

By Emil William Chynn, MD

Each year, over 1 million Americans have LASIK Laser Vision Correction, and 99% are extremely satisfied with their vision after the procedure. However, there are still many misconceptions about LASIK among consumers. Dr. Chynn is an eye surgeon with a LASIK center at 69 W. 14th St. (212-741-8628). He will address many of the misconceptions about LASIK in this article--the first in a series about vision disorders.

**I have astigmatism, and am farsighted. Isn't LASIK only for nearsighted people?**

True, when LASIK first came out several years ago, it was only FDA-approved for treating myopia (nearsightedness). Since then, the FDA has expanded the type of vision disorders that can be safely and effectively treated by LASIK. Dr. Chynn, for example, was highly nearsighted and astigmatic before his own LASIK in 1998, and is now 20/20 without glasses or contacts!

**Is your vision permanently corrected after LASIK, or can your prescription "come back?"**

This is a very common question, but once you understand how LASIK works, you will understand the answer. LASIK works simply by polishing your eyeglass prescription directly onto your eyeball with a laser. The tissue that is removed floats up in a cloud in the air, and is removed by a suction tube. How then, can your prescription "come back" unless years later, the tiny particles removed by the suction tube decide to jump back onto your cornea?

**Why, then, is it sometimes necessary to get a "touch up" after your initial LASIK?**

In my practice, my enhancement rate for all patients is only about 3%, which means that 97% of all patients never require a “touch up.” There are several reasons why an enhancement may be necessary. If your prescription was continuing to get worse at the time of your LASIK (this is called “progression”), then an enhancement may be necessary at a later date. To decrease your chance of needing an enhancement, Dr. Chynn often intentionally overcorrects his younger patients by a small amount—this is similar to buying children’s clothes one size larger to allow for growth. Also, it is expected that the initial effect decreases slightly due to wound healing—this is called “regression,” and is accounted for by a “nomogram” calculation at the time of your surgery. The experience of your surgeon helps decrease the chance you need an enhancement—Dr. Chynn has performed thousands of LASIKs.

**I am starting to need reading glasses. Can LASIK still help me?**

Yes. Whether or not they have LASIK, everyone over 40 will need help reading because they become “presbyopic.” A special form of LASIK, called “monovision” can decrease your need for reading glasses. Monovision is a technique in which one of your eyes is treated slightly differently so that you can read out of that eye. You will still need to wear reading glasses when you are over 50 to read very fine print, but you will always be able to read larger print items without readers. Especially in patients who are farsighted, or hyperopic (with a “+” prescription), LASIK will help you read (see close) much better!

**I am into natural remedies and herbal products. Can any of them help my vision?**

Again, once you understand the problem, you will understand the solution. The etiology (reason) for myopia, or nearsightedness, is that your eyeball itself is too long. This explains why your eyesight gets worse when you are young—because

your eyeball continues to grow longer until you are about 29 years old. LASIK works by removing tissue from the front surface of your eye (the cornea) to correct the imperfect shape of your eye. Natural remedies, like an herbal pill, although useful for many conditions, of course cannot permanently and accurately correct the shape of your eyeball! We recommend that all our patients use a multivitamin with antioxidants to decrease their risk of developing cataracts later in life—the focus of a future newsletter. After LASIK, UV protection with a good pair of sunglasses is also essential.

**I have more questions about LASIK. How can I get them answered?**

The best thing to do is to come in for a free consultation, where Dr. Chynn will personally examine and test your eyes, and discuss all your concerns about LASIK. There is no cost, and no obligation. Call toll-free: 888-I-WANT-2020, 888-492-6820, or email us any question you have by visiting our website: [WWW.IWANT2020.COM](http://WWW.IWANT2020.COM).