

Are You a Good Candidate for LASIK?

While LASIK is a helpful operation for many with vision problems, it's not for everybody. There are six basic guidelines that will help you determine if LASIK is appropriate for you (Keep in mind, though, that a medical professional is the best judge of whether you should seek this procedure).

1) First, the overall condition of your eyes must be healthy. If there is any condition that might affect the way your eyes react to surgery or to the healing process, you should wait until the condition is no longer an issue. Examples of conditions that might require you to wait include dry eyes, eye injury or conjunctivitis. There are a few other conditions that might exclude you completely from consideration, including cataracts, keratoconus or uncontrolled glaucoma.

2) Obviously you have to be an adult. There are certain surgical procedures that only adults may receive. Some of these require that the patient be 18, while others require you be 21. There are some exceptions that will allow LASIK for minors, but these are few and rare.

3) Your vision should be stable for at least one year. This is important because a lot of young adults undergo changes in their contact lens or eyeglass prescriptions during their teenage years. However, usually sometime in their 20s, their vision will stabilize. In most cases, this means that nearsightedness gradually becomes worse, although there are other changes that might stabilize also. Until the person's eyes have settled down into a definite prescription, they are not considered good candidates for LASIK eye surgery. If you're unsure whether or not your prescription is stable, your eye doctor should be able to tell you.

4) If you're pregnant, this might require you to postpone LASIK surgery. This is because pregnancy will cause some hormonal changes that in turn cause levels of some fluids in the body to rise. Often, this will change the shape of the cornea. Until your hormones (and as a result, your vision) have normalized, you should not have LASIK surgery performed.

5) In many cases, degenerative and autoimmune diseases will disqualify you from a LASIK procedure. Some of these diseases include rheumatoid arthritis, Sjogren's syndrome, type 1 diabetes, AIDS and HIV. It comes down to this: If the condition inhibits your body's ability to heal, this could make the result of your refractive surgery less than perfect.

6) Your eyeglasses or lens prescription should be within certain designated limits. To find out what limits, speak with your eye doctor.

Many of these conditions, you can evaluate for yourself. For instance, you know your age and you know if you're pregnant. Other considerations, such as what disease you have that might be a consideration, or whether or not your vision is stable enough, can only be determined with the help of a medical professional. Therefore, a complete physical is recommended, and consultation with your physician and eye doctor, before scheduling LASIK surgery. Once you have the green light from these individuals, request the operation.

About the Author

Phillip Dye is the creator of Lasiksurgeryrx.com. Lasiksurgeryrx.com covers information from [Lasik Laser Eye Surgery](#) to Presby Lasik.

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