
Refractive Surgery: Is It Right for You?

Successful refractive surgery may free you from glasses or contacts. But before choosing this surgery, talk with your eye care provider. Get all the facts. Find out what refractive surgery can and can't do. Knowing the risks will help you make the right decision for you.



The choice is yours

Refractive surgery can improve your eyesight. But it has risks and limitations.

- Even after surgery, you may sometimes need glasses or contacts. If you're older than 40, you may need reading glasses. This is true even if you don't use them now.
- After surgery, recovery will take weeks or months. During this time, you may not be able to do certain things. This can include driving and certain sports.
- If your first surgery doesn't work the way you want, you may need a second procedure. This is called re-treatment or enhancement.
- Be sure that you understand the risks and possible complications before making a decision.
- Consider getting a second opinion before deciding to have surgery.
- Ask the surgeon about their training in this surgical area and how many procedures they have done.

What you should consider

Know the pros and cons of each type of refractive surgery. Discuss your health history with your eye care provider. Refractive surgery may not be for you if you:

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- Have unstable vision
 - Have a vision problem that is too severe
 - Have a condition that slows healing or increases your risk for infection
 - Have an eye disease, such as advanced glaucoma or cataracts
 - Are taking certain medicines
 - Are pregnant, or plan to become pregnant in the near future
 - Are breastfeeding

If you're older than 40

As you get older, your lens becomes stiff. It can't easily change shape to focus light (accommodate). This can cause you to have trouble focusing on nearby objects. This condition is called presbyopia. So if you're older than age 40, you may need reading glasses.

Another option for coping with presbyopia is monovision. To create monovision, refractive surgery is used to adjust one eye for near vision. Your other eye is adjusted for far vision. This option is not for everyone. Talk with your eye care provider. You may be able to try using a pair of monovision contact lenses. This can help you decide if this type of surgery is right for you.