

Refractive Surgery - Laser Surgery

A great deal of interest has been expressed in having surgery to enable one not to have to wear glasses or contact lenses. There are several ways that this can be achieved and the correct treatment for you depends on your refractive error (Spectacle prescription)

Excimer Laser Surgery has attracted a lot of interest.

Indications for Refractive Surgery

In my opinion you need to have a reason for undertaking this I do not feel the risk of the procedures can be justified.

Eg. You play sports and glasses/contact lenses interfere with this

You wish to enter a profession eg. Police Force for which a certain minimum visual acuity without glasses is required.

You are unable to tolerate Contact Lenses or Spectacles

There may well be others.

Short Sight - Myopia

Low to Moderate amounts of short sightedness can well be treated with the Excimer Laser. This is a procedure where by the laser carves an image of your spectacle prescription out of your cornea (the Window to the eye). It is like having your spectacles incorporated permanently into you eye. The predictability for this procedure is higher with the less degrees of short sightedness, nevertheless it is fairly predictable.

Complications

The main one is it does not perfectly correct the sight leaving you still short sighted needing glasses, al be it much weaker ones.

Haze - Some people loose up to 1 line of best vision and is a risk with the procedure. It does settle but some people do have permanent damage. It is rarely a major problem.

Glare - The older technique caused a problem with this, but the modern machines are less of a problem.

Cost varies from £400 per eye to £1,500 per eye depending where you have it undertaken.

Very Short Sighted - High Myopia.

The laser cannot correct such high degrees. Other techniques are required such as the new implantable Collomer Intraocular lens implant. This is like a contact lens but it sits between your natural lens and the iris. Only an Ophthalmologist is allowed to advise you on this.

Clear Lens extraction - If you remove your natural lens often this will cure the short sightedness, the disadvantage is you are having an operation very similar to a cataract operation with all its associated risks.

Astigmatism

Some of the new Excimer Lasers are able to correct small degrees. Alternatively standard Keratometry surgical procedures are able to deal with this. This involves incising the cornea to

change its shape. The risks depend on the amount but is relatively safe in experienced hands. The risks involved are infection, and weakening the cornea structurally.

Long Sightendness

This is most difficult to treat. Trials with the Excimer laser are under way.