

LEARNING ABOUT PRK (PHOTOREFRACTIVE KERATECTOMY)

Life without glasses or contact lenses can become a reality for those with reservations about LASIK. Also, patients who have been told that they are not candidates for LASIK due to a thin, steep, or dry cornea, may be candidates for a state-of-the-art procedure that is just as effective at improving vision and reducing or eliminating the need for glasses and contact lenses.

The PRK Procedure

Many people who are not good candidates for LASIK can still experience the benefits of refractive surgery and visual freedom thanks to PRK. PRK takes a maximum of 5 minutes per eye and is completely bladeless. In addition, no suction ring is used on the eye and significantly less corneal tissue is altered. It uses the same precise laser as LASIK to sculpt the cornea, but instead of being applied under a flap, the laser is applied directly on the cornea. PRK has been used by surgeons all over the world for more than 10 years, even longer than LASIK and now makes up a large percentage of refractive procedures being performed in the United States.

After PRK

Once the eye is corrected, a soft contact lens is placed to protect your eye while the healing takes place. During the healing time, typically 5 to 7 days, it is normal to experience blurry or fluctuating vision, light sensitivity, dryness and/or a scratchy sensation. It is common for one eye to heal faster than the other so do not be alarmed if your vision is better initially in one eye. You will be given oral pain medication if necessary, along with topical eye drops. Most people do not work for at least two days after surgery to allow their eyes to rest. You may find that you do not feel confident driving while the protective lenses are in.

At your one week visit the contact lenses are removed and your vision will continue to improve. Drops will be given to use for several weeks, which will aid in healing and prevent inflammation.

Although it can take a few weeks to a few months to fully reach your optimal vision, your outcome will be the same, possibly even better than it would be if you had LASIK. The long-term safety and corneal stability will be much higher than if you had LASIK. A few days or weeks of patience will be rewarded with excellent vision and an increased degree of safety.

If you would like to discuss the procedure with patients who have had PRK (or similar procedures LASEK or epi-LASIK), please ask our staff for patient references. As always, we encourage you to speak to Dr. Schwartz regarding any questions you may have.



Dr Schwartz received his medical degree from Loyola University Chicago and went on to complete his residency in Ophthalmology and refractive surgery training at The Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York. He has published several articles in the field of ophthalmology and his particular area of expertise involves cataract and refractive surgery. He performs the very latest techniques in lens and cornea based vision correction. Dr Schwartz is a member of the prestigious Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society and an active member of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery. In addition he is a clinical instructor at The Mount Sinai School of Medicine where he is involved in teaching medical students and residents in medical and surgical ophthalmology.