

# FTC Consumer Alert

Federal Trade Commission ■ Bureau of Consumer Protection ■ Office of Consumer and Business Education

## Getting the Clear Picture on Lasik Eye Surgery

Tired of wearing glasses or contact lenses? Considering Lasik eye surgery? Lasik, one of the newest procedures for vision correction, is surgery to a very delicate part of the eye. And while hundreds of thousands of people have had Lasik, most very successfully, it's not for everyone.

The Federal Trade Commission and the American Academy of Ophthalmology advise you to get the clear picture on what you can expect before you sign up for the procedure.

Are you a good candidate for Lasik? Before you can weigh the risks and rewards, know that:

- You should be at least 18 years old and in good health.
- You should not be pregnant or nursing.
- You should not be taking certain prescription drugs, such as Accutane or oral prednisone.
- Your eyes must be healthy and your prescription stable.

Even if you have the surgery, you may not get the perfect vision you're hoping for. That's because 20/20 does not always mean perfect vision. And if you have Lasik to correct your distance vision, you'll still need reading glasses when you're around age 45. You also may need to return for additional surgery, called "enhancements," to fine-tune your vision. Remember that Lasik is too new to know if there are any long-term ill effects beyond five years after surgery and the procedure cannot be reversed.

If you decide to proceed, ask your surgeon the following questions:

- How long have you been doing Lasik surgery?
- How do you define success? What's your success rate? What is the chance for me to achieve 20/20?
- What laser will you be using for my surgery? Make sure your surgeon is using a laser approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- What's involved in after-surgery care?
- Who will handle after-surgery care? Who will be responsible?
- What about risks and possible complications?
- What about side-effects? How long will they last?

For more information about Lasik, call the FTC toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP, and ask for the publication, **Basik Lasik: Tips on Lasik Eye Surgery**.

## Where To Complain

The **Federal Trade Commission** works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint, or to get free information on any of 150 consumer topics, call toll-free, **1-877-FTC-HELP** (1-877-382-4357), or use the complaint form at **www.ftc.gov**. The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, and other fraud-related complaints into **Consumer Sentinel**, a secure, online database available to more than 240 civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and Canada.

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