

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
MADIGAN ARMY MEDICAL CENTER
US ARMY REFRACTIVE SURGERY CENTER
9040A FITZSIMMONS DRIVE
TACOMA, WA 98431-1100

Post-Operative Instructions

LASIK

Overview: LASIK refractive eye surgery has just been performed on your eye(s) by lifting a partial-thickness corneal flap, changing the shape of the underlying cornea, and replacing the flap to its original position. The flap is very delicate and can easily be displaced or mal-positioned during the first few days following LASIK. It is critically important to follow the post-operative instructions detailed below, as well as those given by your doctor, to improve the chances for an excellent post-surgical visual result.

General Guidelines

1. Contrary to popular belief and advertising, you will **NOT** see well immediately after surgery and for the remainder of that day. Vision will begin to improve within 24 hours.
2. Your vision may fluctuate on a daily basis after LASIK (good on one day, not so good on the next, etc.). This is a normal condition after LASIK surgery, and may persist for up to 2 weeks after surgery, but then goes away.
3. The flaps are very fragile! Do **NOT** vigorously or aggressively rub your eye(s) or squeeze your eyelids tight. Be very careful not to touch the surface of the eye(s) with the tip of the medication bottles when administering your eye drops.
4. On the day of surgery, keep your eyes protected with goggles or sunglasses, except when using eye drops. Dark sunglasses will be provided to you following surgery, or you may use your own.
5. It is **normal** for your eyes to be light sensitive for the first few days after surgery. This is due to a combination of the pupillary dilation, and a natural response to the surgery. This will gradually disappear.
6. Following your eye surgery, it is highly recommended that you go home and take a nap. Valium (Diazepam) is provided to help you relax and fall asleep, if necessary.
7. You should avoid visually attentive activities on the day of surgery – reading, computer work, a lot of TV. These activities will exacerbate the dry eye effect that is normal after the surgery.
8. You may begin to use your eye drop medications on the day of surgery. Please use all medications given to you in accordance with the directions of your eye surgeon. **Please bring all medications with you when you come in for your doctor appointments after surgery!**
9. Protective goggles or eye shields have been provided to you. These should be placed over the eyes prior to sleeping (daytime naps, bedtime, etc.).
10. It is okay to shower, bathe, and wash your hair. Try to get as little water as possible in the eyes during these activities.
11. If **narcotic** pain medications have been prescribed by your doctor, you should **NOT** drive or operate machinery while taking these medications.

12. Although vision will improve relatively quickly after surgery, you should not operate a motor vehicle until you are comfortable that your vision has returned to a level that will allow you to drive safely.

Surgical Discomfort / Appearance

1. The numbing drops will wear off about 30-60 minutes following surgery.
2. It is **normal** for your eyes to feel gritty, sandy, or a sensation that something is in them. This will disappear within a few days after surgery.
3. It is **normal** for the eyes to be red following surgery, or to have small hemorrhages on the white part of the eye. This will disappear within a few days after surgery.
4. Dry eye is **common and expected** after LASIK. This may persist for several months after surgery, but gradually disappears. The liberal use of your artificial tear eye drops will help to control and alleviate this.

Activity Restrictions

1. Convalescent leave is authorized on the day of surgery and for 1 day following surgery.
2. Women should **NOT** wear any eye make-up for 1 week following eye surgery.
3. Camouflage face paint should **NOT** be worn for 1 month following eye surgery.
4. Field duty is **prohibited** for 1 month following surgery.
5. Active duty service members are **non-deployable** for 1 month following surgery.
6. Swimming is **prohibited** for 1 month following eye surgery.
7. Contact sports are **prohibited** for 1 month following eye surgery. After that time, protective eyewear (Oakley, Gargoyles, etc.) is **strongly recommended** when engaged in contact sports. Contact sports include, but are not limited to, football, rugby, soccer, basketball, martial arts, etc.
8. Sunglasses should be worn as needed for comfort, and are recommended when engaged in activities with bright sunlight or adverse environmental conditions such as skiing, snowboarding, mountaineering, cycling, etc.

Medications

To receive refills on the medicated eye drops you must give the pharmacy 48 hours notice. Call the pharmacy and enter the numbers from the box the drops came in and you should be able to pick them up either inside or from the drive-thru two days later. Any complications with this please call the refractive surgery clinic.

If problems, concerns, or emergencies arise during normal duty hours, you should contact the Refractive Surgery Center at 253-968-5516, or the Ophthalmology Clinic at 253-968-1760. After normal duty hours, you should contact the Madigan Emergency Room at 253-968-1390. An Ophthalmologist is on-call and available through the Emergency Room 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.