



FREE PATIENT GUIDE

Your Guide to Clear Vision

LASIK · PRK · Cataract Surgery

How to know which procedure fits your eyes, what to expect,
and how to make it affordable.

2,000,000+
EYES SEEN

20+
YEARS OF
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Educational material — not a substitute for a medical examination.

First, Understand What's Blurring Your Vision

Most vision problems fall into two very different categories — and the right procedure depends on which one you have.

1. Refractive errors — the shape of your eye

When the cornea or lens doesn't focus light precisely on the retina, images blur. This is what glasses and contacts correct, and what laser vision correction (LASIK or PRK) can fix at the source:

- **Nearsightedness (myopia):** distant objects blur — road signs, movie screens, faces across a room.
- **Farsightedness (hyperopia):** near objects blur, and your eyes work overtime to focus at any distance.
- **Astigmatism:** an unevenly curved cornea distorts vision at every distance.
- **Presbyopia:** the age-related loss of near focus that sends most people reaching for reading glasses in their 40s.

2. Cataracts — the clarity of your lens

Inside every eye is a natural lens that, like a camera lens, must stay clear to work. With age, the proteins in that lens gradually break down and cloud it. That clouding is a cataract — and looking through one is like looking through a foggy window.

Cataracts are extremely common: nearly everyone who reaches their 60s develops at least mild clouding, and about half of adults over 80 have had cataracts or cataract surgery. Left untreated, cataracts keep progressing and can eventually cause blindness — but they are very treatable.

Quick self-check: If your main complaint is *blurry distance or near vision that glasses fix*, think refractive error. If it's *cloudy, dim, or yellowed vision, glare and halos at night, or fading colors* — especially past age 55 — think cataract.

LASIK — Laser Vision Correction

LASIK (Laser-Assisted In Situ Keratomileusis) is the best-known laser refractive procedure. Using a computer-guided excimer laser, your surgeon permanently reshapes the cornea so light focuses correctly on the retina — reducing or eliminating your dependence on glasses and contacts.

Who is a good LASIK candidate?

- ✓ Adults 18 and older (most commonly 18–40) with nearsightedness, farsightedness, or astigmatism
- ✓ A stable glasses or contact prescription for at least a year
- ✓ Healthy eyes — no keratoconus, uncontrolled dry eye, or active eye disease
- ✓ Generally healthy — some autoimmune conditions (lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, MS) and pregnancy/nursing call for a delay or a different plan

What the process actually looks like

Step 1 — Free consultation (about 1 hour). Detailed corneal scans and a dilated exam determine whether LASIK is safe and effective for your eyes. (Leave soft contacts out for at least 3 days beforehand.) If you're a candidate, a surgical coordinator walks you through dates, costs, and financing.

Step 2 — Procedure day. The laser treatment itself typically takes less than 10 minutes per eye, and you go home the same day.

Step 3 — Recovery and follow-ups. Most patients notice dramatically sharper vision within a day, see 20/20 or better after healing, and return to their normal routine within 24 hours. Rest, lubricating drops, and scheduled check-ups protect your result.

Why patients do it: waking up with clear vision, freedom for swimming, sports, and travel — and no more yearly spending on frames, lenses, and contact supplies, which for many people adds up to hundreds of dollars every year.

Not a LASIK Candidate? PRK May Be Your Path

PRK (photorefractive keratectomy) reaches the same destination as LASIK — a reshaped cornea and clearer vision — by a different route. Instead of creating a corneal flap, the surgeon gently removes the cornea's thin surface layer (it grows back naturally) and applies the same computer-controlled laser reshaping underneath.

PRK is often the better choice when your corneas are thinner than average, when dry eye is a concern, or when your work or sports carry a risk of eye impact. Recovery takes a little longer than LASIK, but long-term results are comparable.

Cataract Surgery — Restoring a Clear Lens

Cataract surgery replaces the eye's clouded natural lens with a clear artificial one (an intraocular lens, or IOL). It's one of the most frequently performed — and most successful — surgeries in medicine. Many patients are back to normal life quickly, and some end up seeing better than they did before cataracts developed, because the replacement lens can also correct refractive error.

Signs it may be time for a cataract evaluation

- ✓ Blurry, cloudy, or foggy vision that new glasses don't fix
- ✓ Glare and halos around lights; trouble driving at night
- ✓ Light sensitivity, or needing much brighter light to read
- ✓ Colors that look faded or yellowed
- ✓ Frequent prescription changes later in life

Current offer: Family Eye Physicians is offering a free eye exam and 30% off cataract solutions for a limited time — mention this guide when you call.

LASIK vs. Cataract Surgery at a Glance

	LASIK / PRK	Cataract Surgery
Fixes	Refractive errors (myopia, hyperopia, astigmatism)	Clouded natural lens (cataract)
Typical age	18–40s, stable prescription	Most often 55+
How	Laser reshapes the cornea	Cloudy lens replaced with a clear IOL
Time	Under 10 minutes per eye	Outpatient; home the same day
Insurance	Usually elective (not covered) — FSA/HSA eligible	Medically necessary — typically covered

Making It Affordable

- **LASIK offer:** for a limited time, LASIK starting at \$500 per eye plus a free eye exam through the Year of Eyes program — up to \$1,000 in savings on both eyes.
- **Financing:** CareCredit financing with 24 months interest-free for qualified patients — prequalify online in seconds.
- **FSA / HSA:** LASIK is a qualified medical expense, so you can pay with pre-tax dollars.
- **Insurance help:** most plans treat LASIK as elective, but some offer partial benefits or discounts — share your plan details and the team will verify for you. Cataract surgery, by contrast, is generally covered as medically necessary.
- **The long view:** switching from glasses and contacts saves the average patient around \$500 a year.

Your Next Step: A 60-Minute Answer

No guide — and no online quiz — can measure your corneal thickness, map your prescription, or look at your lens. A free consultation can. In about an hour, you'll know exactly which procedure fits your eyes and what it will cost.

Call (708) 636-9393 to schedule your free consultation

or book online at familyeyephysicians.com/our-locations

Six locations across Chicagoland

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Why Family Eye Physicians

A surgical ophthalmology group — board certified, fellowship-trained MD surgeons plus experienced optometrists — with more than two million eyes seen over 20+ years of front-to-back eye care, in six neighborhood offices with hours Monday–Saturday.

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