



Your Most Important Laser Eye Surgery Questions—Answered

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our ebook. Inside, we tackle some of the most popular questions people ask about laser eye surgery.

First, a little note about Optegra Eye Health Care. We are a UK based private eye hospital group. With over 7 nationwide locations, we offer truly bespoke laser eye surgery that is tailor-made for each unique patient. We have been rated as “UK’s Top Rated Laser Eye Surgery Provider” in 2018 & 2019.

We hope you enjoy the ebook. In case you have more questions and you are based in the UK, feel free to contact us to arrange a consultation, or download our free Laser Eye Surgery brochure for more information.

Please also feel free to share this ebook with your friends and family.



LASER EYE SURGERY

How Laser Eye Surgery Can Help You Lose Your Glasses Or Contact Lenses

Are you finding it harder and harder to focus on the words on the page? Getting headaches after trying to read for long periods of time? If so, it could be that your eyes are feeling the effects of age and you're starting to lose your reading vision.

Over the years, the eyes lose their muscular power, making it harder to focus at close distances. This condition is known as presbyopia. It's an age-related refractive condition that results in loss of focus up close. The lens in the eye becomes less flexible, and it usually means that you'll need glasses in order to read.

Presbyopia can occur in people who otherwise have good vision, but it can also occur in people who are already affected by other optical conditions such as astigmatism, myopia and hyperopia. Luckily, there are treatments available at Optegra which can help to correct this very common issue.

What are the symptoms of presbyopia?

There are a number of common symptoms that people with presbyopia suffer from. So, if the following issues sound familiar, then you may well need to think about your options, or book a consultation with Optegra to learn how we can help.

- Difficulty focussing on things in your close range
- Headaches or eye pains when reading or doing close-up work
- Fatigue when focussing for long periods of time
- Relying on brighter or increased lighting
- Having to hold books, mobile phones and other reading materials at arm's length in order to properly focus on them

Onset of presbyopia usually occurs from the age of 40 and becomes more noticeable after that. By the age of 60, many people will have lost the elasticity in the lens that enables them to focus on objects close up.

How can reading vision be improved?

One of the most common options for people with reading vision problems is to use reading glasses, which are specially designed to help the lens focus at short distances.

As reading glasses are only needed for short distances, they can be a bit of a nuisance. Some people wear them on a chain around their necks so that they can easily access them. Others carry them around in a case. But having to constantly put them on and take them off just to read a recipe or an article in the paper can be a bit of a pain. That's where laser eye surgery comes in.

Laser eye surgery for presbyopia

Thanks to developments in technology and surgical procedures, there are now several alternatives available that offer a more permanent solution to reading vision problems.

Laser eye surgery has a very impressive success rate for correcting reading vision. Using a precision laser, your surgeon will make adjustments to your cornea to correct any visual impairments that you

may have. There are several different laser eye treatments available, including LASIK, LASEK and ReLEx SMILE. Depending on your individual circumstances, your surgeon will be able to assess whether you are suitable for laser eye surgery, and will recommend the best treatment option for you.

Another option is lens replacement surgery, an innovative treatment which can correct a wide range of visual problems as well as treating and preventing the development of cataracts.

Arranging your presbyopia treatment

If you're having problems with your reading vision, or you're finding the reliance on your reading glasses is starting to become an issue, come and see us for a free consultation to discuss your options.

Our surgeons are highly trained by the NHS and are all Fellows of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists or equivalent organisations. They're some of the best in the world and you'll be working with the same surgeon throughout your treatment. We have clinics and hospitals all over the UK, including two in London, so there is sure to be a treatment centre close to you.

Who qualifies for laser eye surgery?

With the arrival of new treatment methods, more people than ever are suitable for laser vision correction. Read on below to find out more about who can get laser eye surgery and whether it could be the right option for you.

Am I suitable for laser eye surgery?

The great news is that laser eye surgery can be used to treat a wide range of vision problems. This includes astigmatism (blurred vision), hyperopia (long-sightedness) and myopia (short-sightedness).

There are a few circumstances that could rule you out from receiving laser eye treatment, such as:

- If you are under the age of 21
- If you are pregnant or breastfeeding
- If you have glaucoma
- If you have diabetes
- If your prescription has recently changed

With regards to people with glaucoma and diabetes, there is a higher chance of complications, which is why laser eye surgery is often deemed unsuitable. Nevertheless, if your diabetes is controlled and you have healthy retinas, you may be considered for treatment.

If you are breastfeeding, you should be able to have the surgery once your body returns to normal after finishing breastfeeding your baby, so you've not got too long to wait.

Book a consultation

Everyone is different, so it's really important to book a consultation to assess your suitability for laser eye surgery. Our expert ophthalmic surgeons will be able to give you a final decision as to whether laser eye surgery is an option for you. If it is not, there are other options available, so don't feel like all hope is lost.

What else could affect my suitability for laser eye surgery?

A variety of factors are considered when we assess your suitability for treatment, and that is the important word here – considered. Each case is different, and having any of these circumstances does not mean you are automatically ruled out.

Firstly, the ophthalmic surgeon will ask whether you have any medical conditions. Here are some of the conditions that may affect your suitability for treatment:

- A prism or a squint that is not corrected by contact lenses
- Corneal dystrophy
- Iritis
- Herpes of the eye
- Blindness in one eye
- Partial sightedness
- Optic nerve damage
- Collagen disease or Crohn's
- Macular degeneration
- Keratoconus
- Lupus/SLE
- Rheumatoid arthritis

If you are suffering from any type of eye infection, you need to wait for this to be cleared before you can have laser eye treatment. Your eye pressure also needs to be under control. If you suffer from MS, epilepsy, or dry eyes, you may not be suitable, however, this does depend on the status of your condition, again highlighting why a consultation is so important.

Your prescription is also something to think about. If your prescription is low – for example, if it is under 0.75 – and you do not have astigmatism, you may not be able to have laser eye surgery. Any patients that require very strong glasses may not be suitable, i.e. with prescriptions over +5.00 and -10.00. However, there are alternative treatments available for such circumstances.

Different types of laser eye surgery

When considering your suitability for laser eye surgery, it is important to acknowledge that there are different types of laser eye treatments available. While you may not be suitable for one type of surgery, you may be a candidate for another. For example, LASIK is the preferred laser eye surgery solution for many. This is because recovery is typically a lot faster and there is less discomfort compared to LASEK treatment. However, not everyone is suitable for LASIK, especially if your corneas are too flat or too thin, in which case LASEK eye surgery could be an option. At Optegra, we also offer the new SMILE laser procedure, which is a minimally invasive form of laser eye surgery providing a great alternative to both LASIK and LASEK.

Hopefully, you now have a better understanding of whether you might be suitable for laser eye surgery. Although there are some conditions which can restrict people from receiving treatment, statistics actually show that around 98 per cent of people who contact laser eye surgery clinics are treated. Of course, this differs from clinic to clinic, but the figures are very positive.

If you have any concerns about whether you might be able to get laser eye treatment, it's best to speak to an ophthalmic surgeon to get a definite answer. Book a free consultation with Optegra, and find out what laser eye treatments could be available for you.

Is Laser Eye Surgery Painful?

There are many myths and misconceptions about laser eye surgery, and many people are apprehensive about getting treatment as they think it could be painful.

In reality, the treatment itself is usually pain free, and any discomfort you may feel afterwards is minimal, so it really isn't anything to worry about. Read on below to learn the truth about laser eye surgery pain and what to expect.

BEFORE SURGERY

Your surgeon will administer some eye drops to keep your eyes moist, with a mild anaesthetic to prevent any discomfort. Your eyes will then be held open using a sterile speculum. This might feel a little strange at first, but if you relax you'll soon get used to how it feels. If you are feeling particularly anxious about your surgery, your surgeon can also offer you a mild sedative to help you relax.

DURING SURGERY

Depending on what type of laser eye treatment is carried out (LASIK, LASEK or SMILE), your surgeon will use innovative techniques to reshape the cornea and correct your visual error.

The actual laser treatment part of the process is very short and only lasts about 30 to 40 seconds. The laser itself removes tissue a quarter of a width of a human hair with each pulse, so it is incredibly accurate and focused. It is generally painless, thanks to the anaesthetic administered before treatment, and if you do feel any discomfort it will not last long.

Contrary to popular belief, the laser is not hot but cold. Some patients do report a burning smell but this is simply the laser reacting with the carbon atoms in the air around it. This causes a smell similar to smoke but it has nothing to do with your eye tissue and is nothing to worry about.

[After surgery](#)

After the treatment, there may be some degree of discomfort, depending on which treatment you have opted for.



LASEK: After having LASEK surgery, your eyes will be covered with bandage lenses – soft, clear contact lenses worn to protect the eye whilst it heals. These lenses may need to be worn for up to a week, depending on how quickly the healing takes place.

LASEK patients report some mild to moderate pain, usually in the form of a stinging sensation. However, this is usually very short lived and will soon decrease as the eye heals.

LASIK: Patients who have undergone a LASIK treatment tend to experience less discomfort than with LASEK, as the cornea heals very quickly. There may be some dryness of the eyes in the days after surgery but this can be countered with eye drops. Around 90% of laser eye surgery patients are suitable for LASIK treatment, and it is the most common type of laser eye surgery.

SMILE: SMILE (Small Incision Lenticule Extraction) is the newest and least invasive laser eye treatment available. If you opt for SMILE eye surgery, you'll have less risk of developing dry eyes, as well as a quick recovery time, as no flap is created on the cornea.

[Speak to your surgeon](#)

At Optegra, our world class ophthalmic surgeons are extremely skilled and help to make the treatment as comfortable as possible.

There are very few cases of complications and in almost all cases, these can be effectively dealt with on the spot. Whilst there may be some mild discomfort in the hours and possibly days after surgery as your eyes heal, this is no cause for concern.

However, if you have any concerns either before, during or after your surgery, you can simply ask your surgeon. They are on hand to answer any questions you may have about eye pain or discomfort.

[Don't let fear stand in your way](#)

Some people let fear get in the way of good eyesight. Misconceptions about laser eye surgery have prevented too many people from getting the treatment they need, so it is very important that you know the facts.

Countless patients who have undergone treatment have been amazed at how easy and quick the procedure is. And, while it's true that you may need some time to recover from the treatment, the majority of patients are back at work within a couple of days.

Book a consultation with Optegra or simply drop into one of our free open evenings where our knowledgeable staff will be happy to answer your questions.

Is Laser Eye Surgery Safe?

As with other surgical procedures, laser eye surgery does carry some risks. Complications are rare in laser eye surgery, but if complications do occur they are minor.

Your surgeon will be happy to discuss any concerns with you, and any complications will be carefully managed if they arise.

Is laser eye surgery safe?

When you hear the word 'surgery', it's only natural to have some concerns about safety. After all, some kinds of surgery can be very invasive and require long periods of time for recovery. When it comes to laser eye surgery, however, there are a range of innovative treatments available so you can be back to normal in no time.

While it is true that all forms of surgery carry an element of risk, it's not the case that all surgeries carry the same amount of risk. Laser eye surgery is much less invasive than many other types of surgery, and healing is very quick. It's one of the most common elective procedures in the world, and the complication rate is very low.

Read on below to find out everything you need to know about the safety of laser eye surgery.

Laser eye surgery: the facts

Depending on the type of laser eye treatment you have, surgery usually takes around fifteen minutes for each eye, and while some patients may experience a little discomfort, it is actually a pain-free procedure as your surgeon will administer anaesthetic eye drops.

Laser eye surgery is one of the most common elective medical procedures in the world, and fewer than 4% of treatments experience any kind of complications. When complications do occur, they are usually minor, and if you choose a laser eye surgery provider with good quality aftercare, any issues which do occur can be quickly remedied.

Laser eye surgery risks

As with any kind of surgical procedure, there are some risks of laser eye surgery to be aware of, including:

- **Vision not as expected**

Everyone responds differently to laser eye surgery, and you may find that after your treatment you still need glasses for some tasks, such as reading small print or driving. Laser eye surgery is not a miracle cure, and it's important to be realistic about your expected outcomes from treatment. If you do find that you're unhappy with the results of your treatment, chat to your surgeon when you go along for your aftercare appointment. In some cases, they may be able to perform a 'top-up' treatment to improve your vision further.

- **Flap complications**

In procedures where a flap is created to reshape the cornea, there can be a chance of complications. Here at Optegra, we offer a variety of innovative, bladeless treatments to help keep these risks to a minimum. Our ReLEx SMILE treatment doesn't involve a flap being created at all, meaning there is no risk of flap complications taking place.

- **Dry eyes**

After your treatment, you may experience dry eyes. Your surgeon will give you eye drops to help you manage this and keep them moist. You will also be asked to return for aftercare appointments at regular intervals so we can check up on how your eyes are healing.

- **Glare or halo effect**

In the weeks after treatment, as your eyes adjust you may experience some glare or halo effects in your vision. These will usually diminish in time, and it is very rarely a long-term problem.

Minimising the risks of laser eye surgery

No surgery is completely without risk, so it's important that you are aware of the potential complications before you go ahead with treatment.

There are several things you can do to minimise the chance of complications taking place. First and foremost, always choose a respected provider. It may be tempting to go abroad for cheap laser eye surgery, but the risks associated with this are just not worth it in the long run.

At Optegra, our world-class surgeons have been highly trained by the NHS and are all Fellows of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists or equivalent organisations. We assess each patient's suitability for laser eye surgery before treatment, checking for any underlying conditions that may cause complications down the line.

Every patient receives a treatment plan that's individually tailored to them, ensuring they get the best possible care. You will also be assigned your own ophthalmic surgeon who will work with you throughout the entire procedure, so you can rest assured that your surgeon understands your needs.

You can also minimise the risk by following your surgeon's advice before, during and after treatment. For example, avoid using eye make up in the run up to treatment and afterwards, and refrain from using shampoos, conditioners and other products containing chemicals that can get in your eyes after surgery.

If you experience any pain or discomfort after surgery, then tell your surgeon as soon as possible. If it's out of hours, then use our 24 hour helpline.

Find out more

If you have any more questions about the safety of laser eye surgery, why not come along to one of our open evenings? We hold events regularly at our hospitals and clinics across the UK, and they're a great opportunity to hear from one of our expert ophthalmic surgeons and ask any questions you may have. Alternatively, you could book a free one-to-one consultation with one of our surgeons, to find out whether laser eye surgery is right for you.

We are more than happy to talk through any concerns you may have, and we are confident that once we do, you'll feel less anxious about treatment. Laser eye surgery is a very safe way of creating long-term solutions to visual problems. At Optegra, your eyes are in very safe hands.

Are you considering laser eye surgery and worried about the risks?

Undoubtedly the prospect of having laser eye surgery can be scary. We're all naturally protective of our eyes, so the thought of having a medical procedure performed on them can be daunting. But when you consider the life-changing benefits of having treatment – the minimal risks – which are in line with any other medical procedure – are outweighed exponentially by the new lease of life you'll enjoy after having your vision corrected.

We understand, however, that forthcoming surgery on any part of your body can make you feel anxious. And when you're not equipped with all the facts or fully informed about the potential risks, our brains can get carried away running through all the worst-case scenarios.

Stop right there.

This article is designed to put your mind at rest – once and for all, so you can confidently proceed with your laser eye surgery, relaxed, and knowing exactly what to expect; We're going to tell you all about the potential risks, but we're also going to reassure you that laser eye treatment is a quick and straight forward treatment that carries only a 4% risk of complications – the majority of which are minor problems that will resolve in time when you're body completes the healing process.

Everything you need to know about laser eye treatment risks

Safety first; before we talk about the minimal risks associated with laser eye surgery, we'd just like to demonstrate how safe a procedure it really is – with some facts and figures:

1. Laser eye treatment is not new; ophthalmic surgeons have been performing laser eye surgery – on patients around the world for over 33 years. And there have been huge advancements in treatments and technology during that time
2. More than 35 million laser eye treatments have been performed – worldwide, since 1983
3. And there has not been once single case of permanent blindness reported as a result of laser eye treatment
4. Laser eye treatment carries a 4 in 100 risk of complications. And the majority of those risks are extremely minor – most resolve on their own, in time, or can be easily corrected with further treatment to get the best possible results

Hopefully we've put your mind at ease with those facts. But nothing in life is ever risk-free – especially when it comes to surgery, so there are some risks you need to be aware of to help you to make an informed decision about having laser eye treatment:

Night Vision Problems

During the early stages of the healing process – following your laser eye treatment – it is normal to experience problems with light sensitivity – particularly after dark. In rare cases, this can persist for longer than expected. But your consultant will discuss your individual risk of night vision problems with you during your initial consultation.

Dry Eyes

Traditional laser eye treatment procedures used to carry a greater risk of persistent dry eyes, but new and improved treatment technology has reduced that risk greatly. You *will* experience some dryness following your treatment as your eyes heal, but the likelihood of problems continuing after 6 months is now extremely low.

Infection

All surgery comes with a risk of infection, but the risk of serious infection with laser eye treatment is incredibly low. There is only a 1 in 10,000 risk of infection following laser eye surgery. You are more likely to experience an infection from wearing contact lenses or from a minor cut on your finger. But if, after your laser eye treatment, you show any signs of infection – you should contact your clinic as soon as possible, so it can be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Flap Complications

LASIK laser eye surgery involves the creation of a corneal flap using a precision laser. This procedure presents an element of risk from complications (1 in 2750), but far less than traditional blade laser. And resolution treatment is much faster and more effective – on the rare occasion the complications do arise.

Your safety is our business: How to minimise laser eye treatment risks

Your safety is of our paramount importance to us. Our business is built on a long succession of happy customers who have experienced complication-free laser eye treatment.

In 8 years of business, we've treated over one million eyes! And we wouldn't be the UK's no.1 most trusted eye specialist if patient safety and customer satisfaction wasn't at the forefront of our business.

Our 70 highly skilled ophthalmic surgeons are all members of the Royal College of Ophthalmic Surgeons and our 30 state of the art eye clinics and eye hospitals all adhere to the strict guidelines for laser eye treatment set out by NICE (The National Institute of Clinical Excellence) – to give you extra peace of mind.

What Is SMILE Laser Eye Surgery?

ReLEx® SMILE is an innovative form of keyhole laser eye surgery which can correct vision for people with higher degrees of short-sightedness. SMILE stands for Small Incision Lenticule Extraction, and is a bladeless procedure which is minimally invasive. SMILE eye surgery is suitable for people with or without astigmatism, and it can be a great alternative to the more well-known LASIK and LASEK treatments.

Read on to learn more about what SMILE laser eye surgery is, its benefits, who is suitable for the treatment and what to expect after surgery.

How does SMILE eye surgery work?

SMILE laser eye surgery is a unique treatment using a state-of-the-art Carl Zeiss VisuMax laser. The procedure works as follows:

- Firstly, your surgeon will administer anaesthetic eye drops to numb the eye, ensuring that the treatment is completely painless.
- Next, the Carl Zeiss VisuMax laser is used to place a number of pulses on the cornea's centre with extraordinary precision.
- The pulses from the laser then create tiny bubbles, less than one-hundredth of the width of a human hair. These bubbles create the outline for the tissue that needs to be removed.
- The laser creates a small connecting tunnel which allows the surgeon to draw out the tissue, therefore changing the shape of the cornea to improve your vision.

The whole procedure is completed in less than 15 minutes for both eyes, with the laser only being used for a small proportion of this time.

The benefits of SMILE laser eye surgery

Now you know more about SMILE and how it works, let's take a look at the benefits of this treatment and how it differs from other types of laser eye surgery.

- **More people are accepted for this type of treatment** – SMILE is a minimally invasive form of laser eye surgery, which means that more people are suitable for treatment than with LASIK and LASEK. This is an important benefit for those who have been told they can't have other types of surgery.
- **No chance of flap complications** – One of the main differences between SMILE eye surgery and other options such as LASIK is that no flap is created during the SMILE procedure. This means there is no risk of complications such as the flap folding or moving, and it also means the eye is more comfortable after the procedure has taken place.
- **Quick procedure** – As with other laser eye surgery procedures, SMILE is really quick. The total treatment time is usually around 20-30 minutes.
- **Speedy recovery** – Patients can expect to recover quickly after SMILE eye surgery, and experience less discomfort compared with methods such as LASIK due to no flap being created around the cornea. Unlike LASEK surgery, there are usually no bandage lenses

- required, although in some cases surgeons may ask you to wear them overnight as a precaution.
- **Fast results** – Following SMILE eye surgery, vision typically improves by 80% within the first few hours, and reaches maximum improvement within a few weeks, according to trials carried out across the UK, Germany, France and Denmark. By comparison, LASIK typically gets results after around 24 hours, whilst LASEK can take a few days.
- **No dry eyes** – You are much less likely to experience dry eyes after SMILE surgery than you would be with LASIK surgery, due to the fact that there's no flap to heal.

Who is suitable for SMILE treatment?

SMILE laser eye surgery is suitable for a wider range of people than other techniques such as LASIK and LASEK. If you've been told you're unsuitable for another type of laser eye surgery, SMILE could be a good alternative.

For example, if any of the following circumstances apply to you, then you may find you are unsuitable for LASEK or LASIK treatment, but SMILE eye surgery could still be an option:

- You have a thinner than average cornea
- You have an intolerance to contact lenses
- You have mild to moderate dry eyes

Of course, to get a definitive answer as to whether this is the right treatment for you, you will need to book a consultation with one of Optegra's experienced ophthalmic surgeons.

What to expect after SMILE laser eye surgery?

After the SMILE treatment, vision is typically 80% better within a few hours, and reaches 100% improvement within a few weeks, according to trials. One thing you do need to be aware of is that, while recovery is quick, there is also the chance that your vision will temporarily be slightly blurry after the operation. This is completely normal, and at Optegra we provide comprehensive aftercare to give you peace of mind.

Our laser eye surgery aftercare plans include an appointment the day after your surgery and then follow-up checks at intervals for up to 12 months afterwards. Aftercare appointments are an opportunity for you to raise any concerns you may have, and for your surgeon to check on your progress and assess whether any further treatment is required.

Next steps

Hopefully, you now have a better understanding of ReLEx® SMILE laser eye surgery, your potential suitability and the many benefits that are associated with this method of treatment.

If you are thinking of having laser vision correction, the best thing to do is to book a consultation with an ophthalmic surgeon here at Optegra. Your surgeon will be able to tell you whether SMILE laser eye surgery is the best option for your requirements, and can provide tailored advice and answer any questions you may have.

At Optegra, we make sure that the surgeon who carries out your initial consultation is also the one to carry out your treatment and any aftercare you might need, so you can rest assured that you're getting the very best personalised care from start to finish.

What to expect after laser eye surgery?

Sometimes, uncertainty about what to expect after laser eye surgery can put people off getting treatment. Some people fear that they will be in pain or discomfort for an extended length of time, whilst others worry that they will need to take a lot of time off work. The good news is, recovery from laser eye surgery is straightforward and quick for the overwhelming majority of patients. Of course, everyone is different, and recovery times vary for different types of laser eye surgery. To get a better understanding of what to expect, take a look at our guidance below.

What are the possible side effects of laser eye surgery?

As with any type of surgery, there are always potential side effects. Following surgery, you may experience one or more of these side effects, or you may not experience any at all. Everyone is different. So, let's take a look at some of the possible side effects of laser eye surgery in further detail:

- **Halo effect** – Some people experience a mild halo effect or a glare around bright lights, especially at night once they have had laser eye treatment. In most cases, this will reduce significantly within the first month after treatment. After roughly three months, you should not have any issue with this whatsoever but any lasting effects can usually be managed with the help of your ophthalmic surgeon.
- **Hazy vision** – It is not uncommon to experience slightly reduced sharpness of vision or hazy vision, often likened to “soft focus”, for the first few weeks following treatment, especially in low-light environments.
- **Dry eyes** – Some people experience some dryness of their eyes after laser eye treatment. You will be provided with eye drops in order to manage any discomfort. Your eyes will return to their pre-surgery state once they begin to heal.
- **Temporary discomfort** – You should expect temporary discomfort for the first few days after treatment, especially if you have had LASEK surgery. This might include symptoms such as light sensitivity and mild irritation, and patients often find wearing normal sunglasses when outside is helpful.

How long could it take to get back to normal after laser eye treatment?

The recovery period depends on the type of laser eye treatment you have. LASIK is the most popular form of laser eye surgery, and most people see results within a mere 24 hours. This is a quick procedure, and the results are rapid. There will be no stitches required, and life tends to go back to normal very quickly.

Not everyone is suitable for LASIK surgery, however, and therefore LASEK surgery may be the treatment for you. The recovery process is slower with LASEK treatment. Your eyes may feel uncomfortable after the treatment for a few days. You will also find that bandage contact lenses need to be worn for up to a week. However, there is less chance of experiencing dry eyes when going down this route.

Another innovative treatment option provided by Optegra is SMILE laser eye surgery. Like LASEK, there is less risk of developing dry eyes with this approach, and the good news is that the recovery process is quick. You may have blurred vision for a little longer than with LASIK, but this is completely normal and nothing to worry about.

For more guidance, take a look at our recent blog post which outlines how soon after laser eye surgery you can resume normal activities, like driving, showering and going back to work.

Possible complications from laser eye surgery

The good news is that complications after laser eye treatment are very rare. In fact, fewer than four per cent of patients experience any complications, and if you choose a quality clinic, you can be sure they will do everything they can to reduce the risk of any issues happening. The main risks of laser eye surgery are as follows, and although they are rare, it is good to be aware of them:

- **Flap complications** – The chances of flap complications are minimal when using a clinic such as Optegra, as we provide a range of innovative, bladeless laser eye treatments. This is a much safer approach when compared with the traditional blade methods used by some other clinics and, if complications do arise, they have a much better likelihood of resolution.
- **Vision after surgery is not as anticipated** – Some people, although very few, find that they still have some degree of astigmatism, long-sightedness, or short-sightedness once their eyes have healed from surgery. Everyone reacts different to the treatment, and such individuals may find they still need glasses for certain tasks. However, your surgeon may be able to recommend alternative options, such as an enhancement of the original treatment, to further boost your vision.

Laser eye surgery aftercare from Optegra

When you choose Optegra for laser eye treatment, you can be sure of exceptional aftercare. We ensure that you see the same ophthalmic surgeon from your consultation, through to your surgery, and your follow-up appointments. Once you have had laser eye treatment, you will have a follow-up appointment the next day to ensure that everything is how it should be. Our laser eye surgery aftercare then involves routine checks throughout the following year, and, of course, you can always contact us whenever you have any queries or want to make an appointment.

Laser Eye Surgery Aftercare Explained

A thorough and effective aftercare process is essential when it comes to laser eye surgery. Think about it – if you had any other kind of surgery you wouldn't simply get up, walk home, and never think about it again, so why should your eyes be any different?

When choosing a laser eye surgery clinic, aftercare is something you need to consider carefully. After all, getting the right care is pivotal in ensuring you get the results you are hoping for, whilst also reducing the likelihood of any irritation or complication after the treatment. Here at Optegra, we are pleased to offer thorough and comprehensive laser eye surgery aftercare for all of our patients. Read on to find out everything you need to know.

Why is the aftercare process so important?

A lot of people overlook the importance of getting proper aftercare following laser eye surgery. However, it is crucial to recognise that your eyes are going to be sensitive following treatment, and you need to protect them to reduce the risk of complications. In order to ensure you get great results from your surgery, it's important to listen to the advice of your ophthalmic surgeon.

At Optegra, we offer patients a follow-up appointment the day after surgery to check on your progress, which is a great opportunity to speak to your surgeon about any questions or concerns you may have. After that, you'll have routine checks throughout the following year, and you can always contact us if you have further queries. This helps to ensure that any problems are picked up early and can be addressed as soon as possible.

Aftercare advice for laser eye surgery

Here are our top tips to help ensure that your experience following laser eye surgery goes as smoothly as possible:

- **Make sure you've got the help you need** – Ask a friend or family member to pick you up from the clinic after your treatment, and let someone know if you need any help with everyday tasks in the days following your surgery.
- **Avoid dusty environments** – It is important to avoid dust as much as possible for at least a week after having laser eye treatment. Your eyes will be healing during this period, and if they come into contact with dirt, it may cause an infection.
- **Take care when showering** – You need to be extremely careful when washing your face or your hair after having laser eye surgery. Avoid taking a shower until the day after your treatment, and take care not to get soap or other products near your eyes.
- **Wear sunglasses** – Your eyes may feel more sensitive to light straight after you've had laser eye surgery, so wearing sunglasses for a few days after treatment may help you to feel more comfortable.
- **Use eye drops** – Antibiotic eye drops can help to prevent infections from occurring, as well as helping to counteract problems with dry eyes. At Optegra, our experienced ophthalmic surgeons will provide you with suitable eye drops to use after your laser eye treatment.

What NOT to do after laser eye surgery

- **Go on holiday** – You should wait around ten days after laser eye surgery before going on holiday. This is because your eyes need time to heal, and it's also advisable to stay close to home in case you have any concerns or need further treatment.
- **Go to work** – You should be able to return to work after a day or two if you've had LASIK or SMILE eye surgery, but you may need longer if you've had LASEK, depending on your circumstances and the type of role you do.
- **Wear eye make-up** – You should not wear any eye make-up, or any products around your eyes, for at least a week after the surgery.
- **Shower** – You should avoid washing your hair or taking a shower for at least a day after the treatment.
- **Rub your eyes** – This is especially important if you have had LASIK eye treatment, as rubbing your eyes can interfere with the flap created during the surgery.

- **Smoke or be around smokers** – If smoke gets into your eye, it will increase the chances of you rubbing your eyes, and it can cause real discomfort.

For more advice, take a look at our recent blog post which explains how soon you'll be able to get back to normal after having laser eye surgery, and if you're in any doubt then please speak to your surgeon for guidance.

When to get in touch with your surgeon

Whilst most people have a hassle-free and easy recovery process after laser eye surgery, you do need to be aware of the signs that it is time to call the doctor. This includes the following:

- Discharge from your eye
- Redness
- A sudden decrease in vision
- Pain

The Optegra aftercare approach

Hopefully, you now have a better understanding of what to expect after laser surgery, and why it is so important to follow an effective aftercare plan.

Here at Optegra, we pride ourselves on offering comprehensive aftercare to make sure we get the very best results for each patient. We also ensure that you see the same ophthalmic surgeon from your very first consultation right through to your treatment and aftercare, so you can rest assured that your aftercare will be provided by someone who really understands your needs.

Following your surgery, we'll make an appointment for you to come in for a check-up the very next day. If you have any concerns, there's no need to wait for your next appointment though – just give us a call and we'll make sure you get the support you need.

Venue – Should You Choose A Hospital Based or High Street Provider?

While the advancement in laser eye surgery and related outcomes have been impressive in recent years, it is still a serious surgical procedure. One of the key questions all potential patients will need to consider is whether to have treatment in a professional hospital environment, or a small high street based clinic.

The good news is that laser eye treatment is now virtually pain free, and lasts mere minutes with patients being able to resume work as quickly as the next day. The downside to this is that people mistakenly think that the choice of provider is less important, and often overlook the importance of obtaining treatment in a hospital setting. After all, there are more small high street or shopping mall based providers than dedicated eye hospitals.

Just remember, when it comes to your eyes, nothing should be taken for granted. In this post, we explore the many benefits of choosing a serious, hospital based laser eye surgery provider like Optegra.



Dedicated Eye Hospitals Like Optegra Facilitate Patient Comfort

With a large, purpose built eye hospital you're certain to get the most comfortable care from the waiting room to treatment and recovery. A hospital environment will also ensure a generous staff to patient ratio, so you're always going to be in the best possible hands. While most clinics will force you to recover in a generic waiting room (sometimes seated next to strangers), hospital based providers like Optegra have spacious recovery areas such as the private recovery patient areas in our flagship Central London hospital.

Hospitals Provide A Clinical, Clean & Sterile Setting For Treatment

When considering surgery, a hospital environment provides a sterile and professional venue to aid treatment and recovery. You wouldn't have any other type of surgery on the High Street or a shopping mall, why would it be any different for your eyes?

Hospital Based Providers Like Optegra Are Best Suited To Offer A Wider Range Of Bespoke Treatments

Optegra are among a few UK providers who offer the latest ReLEx SMILE laser eye surgery. Most high street based clinics will not even talk about this option, because they do not provide it. Some people are naturally better suited to SMILE than the more traditional LASIK or LASEK treatments. At Optegra, our large hospitals are equipped with the latest technology to provide truly bespoke treatments



based on what suits the patient. This is in contrast to many smaller clinics who are only equipped to offer a limited choice of treatments.

5 Star Dedicated Eye Hospitals Are Ideally Placed To Attract The Best Surgical Talent

Aside from access to the best facilities and latest technology, your choice of surgeon is crucial in receiving the best treatment. Optegra eye hospitals have been able to attract truly world renowned surgeons, who are highly experienced, NHS trained and undoubtedly the best in their fields. Between them, they have treated over 1.3 million eyes – read more about our laser eye surgeons .

No Expense Spared Technology

At our dedicated eye hospitals, we're proud to be able to offer our patients world class technology and equipment. As a nationwide eye hospital group, we have our own Eye Sciences department who constantly monitor our technology to ensure our impeccably high standards are maintained. Our Eye Sciences professionals also regularly consult with our expert surgeons to discuss new technology investments where appropriate. Small high street clinics simply do not have the means or ability to do the same.

Our Dedicated Eye Hospital Facilities Are One Of The Many Reasons We're "UK's Top Rated"

While there are several reasons we are recommended by GP's and Optometrists, our immaculate eye hospitals are central to their trust in Optegra. Beyond winning the trust of our fellow eye professionals, Optegra have also been awarded the accolade of "UK's Top Rated Laser Eye Surgery Provider" in 2018 and 2019 by Doctify.

Considering laser eye surgery? Why not download a free information pack and learn more about the treatments and how Optegra could help you lose your glasses.

How Quickly After Surgery Can You Get Back To Normality

If you're considering having laser eye surgery, it's only natural that you'll have lots of questions about what to expect. One thing most people want to know before they go ahead with the procedure is how much of an impact it is going to have on their daily life after treatment. You may be wondering if you'll need to take time off work, whether you'll be able to drive after the procedure, and how quickly you'll be able to get back to your usual routine. If any of these thoughts sound familiar, read on to learn more about life after laser eye surgery.

Showering

You are fine to shower or bathe the day after you have had laser eye surgery. However, you do need to try to ensure you do not get any soap or water in your eyes for at least a week.

Going back to work

The vast majority of patients only need to take two days off work after getting laser eye surgery. However, you should keep in mind that you may need up to a week off work. Every person is

different, and it depends on what type of laser eye surgery you have had, and your own recovery rate. Your ophthalmic surgeon will discuss this carefully with you in your free consultation and during your first post-op examination.

Driving

Once you have had laser eye surgery, you certainly cannot drive yourself home. You should make sure you have transport pre-arranged. You may also need to come back to the clinic the following day for your first post-op exam. Again, you need to have someone else drive you to and from the clinic or hospital on this day. Once you have had this check-up, the ophthalmic surgeon will advise whether you are able to drive without corrective lenses. Most people are back behind the wheel after two days.

Wearing makeup

It is advisable to abstain from wearing any eye makeup for a week after the treatment. However, you can wear other face makeup, such as lip-gloss and bronzer, a day or two after the treatment. If applying foundation, be very careful around the eye area.

Exercising and sports

If you are itching to get back to the gym, you will be pleased to know that you can do exercise that does not impact your eyes after roughly three days; for instance, you can hop back onto the exercise bike or treadmill. After one week, you will be able to enjoy yoga, Pilates, aerobic exercise, and jogging. If you do weight lifting, please allow two weeks before resuming. We don't recommend swimming or using a steam room or sauna for at least a month after the procedure. Once six weeks have passed, and perhaps sooner if you have had LASEK or SMILE treatment, you can enjoy cricket, squash, tennis, skiing, snowboarding, football, and non-contact martial arts. If you have had LASEK or SMILE treatment, you can also enjoy contact martial arts and rugby after six weeks, although we recommend waiting for three months if you have had LASIK surgery. Finally, do not scuba dive 30 ft. or deeper until at least three months after laser eye treatment.

Using your smartphone

It is not a good idea to use your smartphone, tablet, or PC excessively once you have had laser eye surgery. Again, this is dependent on your own recovery rate, but patients are advised to give it a good 24 to 48 hours before using such gadgets. A week without excessive use would be ideal. If you do need to use the PC, don't forget to use the drops that your surgeon will provide you with, and make sure you blink regularly as well.

Going on holiday

We would advise waiting around 10 days following surgery before you take any trips away, as your eyes will need time to heal and it's best to stay close to home in case you have any concerns or need additional treatment. This is particularly important if you're thinking of travelling by aeroplane, even if it is a short flight, as the atmosphere inside an aeroplane is extremely dry.

If you follow the guidelines mentioned above, you can ensure that your recovery from laser eye surgery is as smooth and complication-free as possible. Remember that every patient is different



though, so it's crucial to listen to the advice from your ophthalmic surgeon and ask them any questions you may have.

If you've still got questions about laser eye surgery, we'd love to help. Come along to one of our open evenings to learn more about the treatments we offer, or book a free, no obligation consultation with one of our expert ophthalmic surgeons to find out if you could be suitable for laser eye surgery.

Thank you for reading – we hope you found the guide useful.

For further personalised help, please feel free to contact us for a consultation (UK), or [download a free brochure](#) to learn more about the UK's top rated laser eye surgery available at Optegra.