



# **ARROWSMITH EYE INSTITUTE**

Eye Surgery Center Of Middle Tennessee



## **The 10 most misunderstood "MYTHS" about LASIK laser eye correction:**

### **I can't have LASIK because:**

- 1.** My vision is too bad!
- 2.** My optometrist told me I can't have LASIK!
- 3.** The procedure is too new and there is not enough data!
- 4.** I'm scared that my eye won't be still during the procedure!
- 5.** LASIK can't help me since I only have trouble reading!
- 6.** LASIK can't help me since I wear bifocals!
- 7.** LASIK can't help me since I have astigmatism!
- 8.** LASIK can't fix my reading vision!
- 9.** I'm too scared!
- 10.** I can't afford it!

The need for refractive eye surgery arises out of the fact that, according to the National Eye Institute, nearly 120 million people in the United States wear glasses or contact lenses to correct nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism. While these substitute lenses provide only temporary solutions, they actually don't fix the problems. In response to this temporary fix, optometrists and ophthalmologists around the world have searched for a more permanent solution to vision correction. The result of their pursuit... refractive eye surgery. Refractive eye surgery refers to surgical procedures which correct vision by changing the shape of the cornea.

Initial refractive surgical procedures involved manually cutting into the cornea to correct its shape. First performed in Japan in the 1940s, the process was improved upon in the 1960s in the former USSR, and was introduced to the US in the late 1970s. These improvements in radial keratotomy or RK surgery made it an increasingly common procedure. The National Eye Institute reported in 1995 that about 250,000 RK procedures were done, up from 30,000 in 1990. Since then, advancements resulting in LASIK have allowed patients with healthy eyes, in just about every case, have their vision corrected allowing them to live a normal life glasses and contacts free.

Even though eye care has arrived to a state of making the need for external aids such as glasses or contacts unnecessary, many myths still prevail causing confusion in the general public. I have outlined some of the most prominent myths or misunderstandings as . . .

**1 My vision is too bad!** Virtually any vision problem stemming from an error in the focusing structure of the vision system can be corrected. In some cases, we use an Artisan Implantable Contact Lens, which is only available in a few locations in the United States other than Arrowsmith Eye Institute in Nashville, Tennessee.

**2 My optometrists have told me I can't have LASIK!** We hear this statement quite often at the Institute. I think it comes from the speed at which advancements have been made and those advancements being filtered to the optometrists. Actually, there is no reason why most can't get rid of their glasses or contacts with today's technology

**3 The procedure is too new and there is not enough data!** Actually the data is overwhelming with over 60 years of refractive procedure history. In the United States alone more than 3 million procedures have been performed giving recipients the freedom from glasses or contacts.

**4 I'm scared that my eye won't be still during the procedure!** The technology is so advanced that most surgeons have the aid of eye tracking mechanisms that follow any micro movements a patient may encounter during surgery.

**5 LASIK can't help me since I only have trouble reading!** At first, that was true. We only could treat myopia or nearsightedness. Now, we can treat the patient who has good distance vision but also has trouble reading usually brought on by presbyopia and commonly called "over forty vision". In fact, I had the procedure performed on myself about two years ago at the Institute. I now perform eye surgery without the aid of glasses!

**6 LASIK can't help me since I wear bifocals!** At first, that was true, also. However, now we have procedures, which relieve the need for glasses or contacts for almost all-normal life occasions.

**7 LASIK can't help me since I have astigmatism!** Once again, this used to be the case. However now, we can eliminate the astigmatism at the same time we correct other refractive errors. Of course, we can treat just the astigmatism by itself if need be.

**8 LASIK can't fix my reading vision!** In fact, the need for reading glasses can be more crippling to your lifestyle than glasses needed for distance. We don't realize how much we use "up close" vision until we lose it. In many cases, we can free the patient from the need for reading glasses by treating only the non-dominant eye.

**9 I am too scared!** Many patients say just that before they come to the Institute for their exam. However, once they meet the staff and have their eyes examined by the same staff assisting with their surgery, the fear factor goes way down. In fact, the biggest complaints I get immediately following the procedure are, "Why did I wait so long?" or "Is that it... that was what I was nervous about?"

**10 I can't afford it!** We have payment plans for everyone, and they are no interest plans at that. In fact, in about 3-5 years, you have already saved enough money from not having glasses or contacts to have paid for your surgery. You will actually begin to save money by having your vision corrected AND have the bonus of having freedom from glasses or contacts. That is an equation you can't argue with.

The treatment has proven to be safe, effective and convenient, and has led to its growing acceptance. The favorable results patients have experienced, and the subsequent positive word-of-mouth that has evolved from their experiences has increased the interest of others seeking freedom from eyeglasses and contact lenses.

