

LASIK and PRK

LASIK stands for Laser-Assisted In Situ Keratomileusis and is a procedure that permanently changes the shape of the cornea, the clear covering of the front of the eye, using an excimer laser. A mechanical microkeratome (a blade device) or a laser keratome (a laser device) is used to cut a flap in the cornea. A hinge is left at one end of this flap. The flap is folded back revealing the stroma, the middle section of the cornea. Pulses from a computer-controlled laser vaporize a portion of the stroma and the flap is replaced. The procedure is usually painless and the improvement in vision is noticeable almost immediately. In most cases, the patient can quickly return to their daily activities, but must avoid bumping the eye or submerging their eyes in water for a short period of time after the procedure.

PRK is similar to LASIK except that there is no flap created. The same excimer laser is used to change the curvature of the cornea directly. It avoids rare complications of LASIK such as dislocation or malposition of the flap. However, the healing time of PRK is usually between 1 to 2 weeks, much longer than LASIK.

Other surgeries to correct refractive errors have been developed in recent years, such as phakic intraocular lens, thermal keratoplasty, intrastromal corneal ring segment (Intac), etc. Our surgeons at Lubbock Eye Clinic will discuss pro and cons for each procedure and choose the best one for you.