

CONSUMER GUIDE TO LASER AND REFRACTIVE EYE SURGERY

John D. Suson, MD, Associate Professor of Ophthalmology
Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute

Thank you for requesting our consumer guide on laser and refractive eye surgery. We are happy you have chosen to learn more about this life-changing procedure.

At the risk of tooting my own horn, I can genuinely say that I am one of the leading experts in LASIK eye surgery. I was one of the first surgeons in Wisconsin to perform this procedure and have carefully followed the many advancements since its inception.

I also have watched this procedure become somewhat of a “fad” surgery, performed at chain store clinics. What I’ve noticed is that the information provided to patients about LASIK surgery is often incomplete, too complicated and sometimes misleading.

That’s why I decided to write this in-depth consumer guide. My intention is to clear up any rumors or falsehoods surrounding LASIK eye surgery. There is no such thing as a “quick and cheap” surgery, and it is important to me that people are made aware of this.

LASIK eye surgery can improve one’s life for the better. The gift of restored vision is a miraculous one and something that I would love to share with as many Wisconsin residents as possible. Take some time to sit down and really read this consumer guide. On behalf of the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute, we hope that this information will be helpful to you as you embark down the path of vision restoration through LASIK eye surgery.

LASIK EYE SURGERY: THE TRUE, THE FALSE AND THE RIDICULOUS

OK, hypothetical question: What would you think if you saw the following advertisement hanging outside the entrance to a hospital?

“This Month Only: Buy One, Get One Free Open-Heart Surgery!
You Pay Zero Down; Monthly Rates of Only \$499 After That!”

I know, pretty ridiculous, right? Advertising such a “special” is just as silly for LASIK eye surgery as it is for open-heart surgery.

The facts are that discounts, zero-down and “buy one, get one free” deals are great marketing techniques for fast food joints, not for surgical clinics. To cut costs, these operations sacrifice what I would



ABOUT DR. SUSON

John Suson, MD, is a comprehensive ophthalmologist with extensive experience in cataract surgery, advanced technology lens implantation and laser vision correction surgery (LASIK). After graduating summa cum laude from Marquette University with a bachelor’s degree in chemistry, Dr. Suson attended medical school at the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), where he graduated with honors in research. He completed his residency in ophthalmology at the MCW Eye Institute before joining Suson Eye Specialists in Milwaukee, an independent practice founded by his father, Dr. Elieser Suson. During his 20 years in private practice, he continued to partner with MCW in the surgical instruction of resident eye doctors. In 2017, Dr. Suson returned to MCW in full by joining the Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences as an associate professor of ophthalmology.



consider necessary quality and care in favor of high volume. Their goal is to get as many people to come in for consultations as possible.

And as for the cheap rates that are advertised by these clinics? We know they may sound alluring, but most of these advertised rates are highly embellished and misleading.

Clinics will use these prices to get people through the door and then will try to up-sell better technologies to increase the customer's total bill. Basically, these high-volume surgical clinics are advertising the rates for the old-fashioned methods of laser eye surgery and then using cheap sales tactics to convince you that you should pay extra to be treated with the current surgical techniques.

At the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute, we use a slightly different technique. Rather than trick customers into coming through our doors with falsified sales claims, we obtain patients based on our high standard of quality and excellent reputation. For us, the current standard of surgical technology and methodology is not an "added on" or "upgraded" purchase. It is simply the only way we perform our LASIK eye procedures, plain and simple.

But that's enough about us ... and certainly enough about those "other surgeons." Let's take a look at just what LASIK eye surgery is all about so you are as informed as possible.

THE ALCON REFRACTIVE SUITE LASIK TECHNIQUE

As stated above, the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute employs only the most technologically advanced methods and tools for all of the procedures we offer.

For our laser eye surgeries, we use the Alcon Refractive Suite LASIK technique, which offers many advantages. But the biggest advantage is this — it is 100 percent blade-free.

The Alcon Refractive Suite LASIK technique is truly the culmination of decades of research and progress within the field of laser and refractive eye surgery.

With Alcon Refractive Suite LASIK, we can accurately and safely reshape the cornea of your eye to perfectly correct your vision. We utilize the two most technologically advanced lasers available to achieve this in a completely blade-free setting.

A blade-free procedure ensures that each patient has a shorter and less painful recovery time. At the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute, we believe that this standard for laser surgery should be the only method ever used for this procedure.

The first laser we use is the Alcon FS200 Femtosecond laser, which creates the initial corneal flap. This laser is used in lieu of the traditional hand-held blade.

The initial corneal flap is ultra-thin and is created to allow us to reshape your corneal tissue, which is what ultimately corrects your vision.

Once we have created the initial corneal flap, it is gently folded back. That may sound a bit too science fiction, but don't worry. Think of it like gently lifting the cover of a hanging calendar and taping it to the wall so that the contents can be easily read.

The second laser used is the Alcon WaveLight® EX500 Excimer Laser with Wavefront Optimized technology. This technologically advanced tool is the most sophisticated in laser eye surgical devices. The reshaping of the cornea is what actually improves and restores your vision. The WaveLight® EX500 laser uses a technology that matches to a personalized map of your cornea, ultimately allowing us to reshape your eye with absolute fingerprint precision.

We completely understand the “ick” factor associated with the sheer touching of one’s eyes, let alone the cutting or slicing of them! However, the LASIK procedure is far less scary in reality than it may seem in print. You are awake for the duration of the procedure, but under topical anesthesia so you feel no pain or discomfort. In addition, the entire procedure only takes a few minutes.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LASER AND A BLADE?

We know what you may be thinking: “Cutting is cutting, so what’s the big difference between a blade and a laser?” Believe us, the benefits of the method are vast.

Many surgeons still rely on the old hand-held steel razor blade known as a microkeratome. We will admit that LASIK eye surgery complications are indeed rare. However, when serious problems do occur, they are almost always related to the use of blades. Removing the microkeratome from the procedure serves as an assurance that complications are highly unlikely.

The Alcon FS200 laser uses the highly advanced Femtosecond laser technology. With Femtosecond technology, rapid pulses of laser light are used to create an extremely precise and smooth layer of bubbles within the cornea. Essentially, this means that the incision created is much smoother and finer than the one that would be created through a microkeratome blade. Once we’ve created this smooth and perfect flap, it can be gently lifted out of the way to allow the rest of the LASIK surgery to proceed.

WHAT IS SO GREAT ABOUT THIS WAVEFRONT-OPTIMIZED TECHNOLOGY?

Wavefront-optimized technology employs extremely advanced optical methods previously used only in applications by NASA in their telescopes. To phrase it simply: This is the absolute best technology that can be used in a laser eye surgery procedure. It is the gold standard of LASIK technology.

The Wavefront-optimized technology used in the WaveLight® EX500 compensates for higher-order optical aberrations and has a system that measures and treats based on the individual topography of your eye.

This technology gives us better visual outcomes than older tools ever could.

AM I A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR THE LASIK PROCEDURE?

We can try to outline the qualities of an ideal LASIK patient; however, the only way to truly know if you are a good LASIK candidate is to visit us for a LASIK evaluation.



ABOUT THE EYE INSTITUTE

The Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute, a national leader as a full-service academic ophthalmology center, is home to 33 physicians and five faculty vision scientists — along with a team of optometrists, researchers and ophthalmic photographers — whose mission is to improve, restore and preserve sight. We provide state-of-the-art clinical and surgical care in a compassionate and timely manner through more than 80,000 patient visits and 3,600 surgical cases each year. A broad spectrum of funding sources, from individual donations to National Institutes of Health grants, enables our researchers to take a multidisciplinary approach to improving the fundamental understanding, diagnosis and management of eye diseases. And through our medical student, graduate student, residency and fellowship programs, we are teaching the next generation of eye care providers, researchers and surgeons.



A consultation will entail:

- A complete eye exam
- Computerized mapping of the cornea
- Undilated and dilated measurements of your prescription
- Evaluation of the medical health of your eyes
- Personalized determination of your qualification as a good LASIK candidate
- Education by our staff and me on the advantages of blade-free LASIK vs. older LASIK methods

With all that being said, here are some of the ideal characteristics of a LASIK candidate. Remember, just because you don't fit each of these attributes does not mean that you shouldn't visit us for a consultation. Every patient is different, and this list is only designed to give you a vague idea of who an ideal patient would be.

- At least 21 years old
- Stable glasses prescription for at least one year
- Farsighted up to +3 diopters or nearsighted up to -10 diopters (with up to 5 diopters of astigmatism)
- No history of trauma to the eyes
- No history of crossed or lazy eye
- No infections of the eyes
- Has not used the following medications: Accutane, Imitrex, Amiodarone
- No uncontrolled diabetes or significant diabetic eye changes
- Not currently pregnant or breast-feeding
- No history of unstable glasses prescription
- No eye diseases that cause unstable corneas
- No underlying eye diseases (e.g. significant cataracts, glaucoma or retina problems)

CAN I HAVE LASIK SURGERY IF I HAVE ASTIGMATISM?

Absolutely! It is common for patients with astigmatism to believe that they are not good LASIK candidates. After all, older technologies did not accommodate these patients. The WaveLight® EX500 Excimer Laser system allows us to accurately correct your astigmatism in addition to any other unusual optical aberrations.

There are a few exceptions, but at your consultation we will be able to verify if your astigmatism can be treated with the LASIK technique.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS AND PAYMENT METHODS?

At the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute, the current rate per eye for the LASIK surgery is \$2,200. While this rate may seem high when compared to what the high-volume clinics claim, it is quite comparable to other prestigious surgeons who use our superb level of technology.

Furthermore, unlike those other surgeons, there are no hidden costs associated with our pricing system.

In fact, we use a global fee that includes all preoperative examinations and testing, the surgery itself, the laser facility fees, and all postoperative examinations for an entire year. This rate also covers any potential surgical enhancements directly related to the LASIK procedure for up to a year.

The Medical College of Wisconsin offers financing options, and our monthly payments are actually very competitive when compared to those offered by the chain clinic LASIK facilities.

WELL, ARE YOU READY FOR LASIK?

Hopefully, you've found this consumer guide helpful.

Still confused? That's quite all right — we don't expect you to master in a few pages what took me years to learn!

For that reason, I invite you to come in for our \$150 consultation. Here, you'll have the opportunity to meet and discuss your LASIK surgery with me prior to the actual procedure.

ONE MORE ANSWER

To answer a question I get asked rather frequently: Yes, I have undergone LASIK surgery.

As a LASIK patient, I experienced the same nervousness and concerns that are to be expected of any laser eye surgery patient. This experience gave me the perspective needed to understand why it is so important to provide my patients with the most optimal methods and instruments available.

That's why the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute provide patients with the Alcon Refractive Suite LASIK method: It is the technique we would choose for our family and ourselves.

Frankly, I don't care about sales or quotas — I only care about each individual patient's overall quality of vision and, moreover, improved quality of life.

At the Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute, we strive to provide exceptional service to each and every one of the individuals who walk through our doors. Even if your time with me ends after your consultation, I hope you leave satisfied and better for the experience. That is just how my colleagues and I think medicine should work.

I look forward to meeting you at your private consultation. Ultimately, I hope that we will be able to restore your vision and restore your eyes to their optimal health and vitality.

On behalf of my Medical College of Wisconsin Eye Institute colleagues and staff, thank you for taking the time to read this free report.

Sincerely,

Dr. John Suson, M.D.

*"There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something better tomorrow."
— Orison Swett Marden, author*



ABOUT MCW

The Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) employs a diverse group of thought leaders in science, medicine, education and community engagement working together to build a healthier world. At MCW, academic medicine is the core of everything we do. It is a way of thinking that finds scientists, physicians and students working hand-in-hand with community to solve the toughest challenges in health and society at large. Every research study and every patient we touch brings new learning, progress and innovation to build on and pass along to the next generation — creating a continuous cycle of life-changing knowledge. We are one of a very unique set of 160 academic medical centers across the nation and the only one in eastern Wisconsin. We take our mission to heart to build a healthier future for people in Wisconsin and across the globe.

