



# For Your EYES ONLY

Lasik isn't the only option to help you see better. **AZLINDA SAID** walks you through other forms of surgery that can help.

**If you are short-sighted, far-sighted or have astigmatism**  
**TRY: LASIK**

This laser procedure changes the shape of the cornea – the transparent dome-shaped part at the front of the eye – so that light entering the eye can hit the retina in the right spot, giving you clearer vision. To do this, a tiny flap is made on the cornea's surface, before the exposed cornea is gently reshaped. The flap is then closed. The procedure should take 25 minutes for both eyes. Most patients can get 20/20 vision a day after surgery.

**If you have high myopia**  
**TRY: LASIK XTRÁ**

This is still Lasik but with an extra component, which you have the option to add on, if your myopia is 800 degrees or more, says Dr Mohamad Rosman, a consultant of refractive surgery service at the Singapore National Eye Centre. It involves adding a special vitamin chemical into the flap to strengthen the cornea. The chemical also reduces the chances of myopia recurring.

"If you suffer from a high degree of myopia, we would have to laser off more of your cornea during treatment. Your cornea is made up of collagen fibres, which are bonded together. The chemical can create more corneal bonds," Dr Rosman explains.

**If you have dry eyes**  
**TRY: RELEX SMILE**

This relatively painless procedure (for both eyes) can correct short-sightedness from 100 to 1,000

degrees and astigmatism of up to 500 degrees. Instead of creating a corneal flap, like with Lasik, Relex Smile removes a small amount of corneal tissue through a tiny cut to help reshape the cornea.

It takes 25 minutes for both eyes, and has fewer after-care risks, says Dr Rosman. "Since there's no flap, there are no flap-related problems – if the flap doesn't heal nicely, it may get dislodged if you rub your eyes too much or accidentally poke them. Also, because the incision is so small, the cornea may be stronger, reducing the risk of myopia or astigmatism recurring."

However, it may take three to four days longer – compared to Lasik patients – for you to regain some form of normal vision. There might be mild discomfort too, although this usually lasts no more than six hours. Most patients can get perfect vision after six months.

Says Dr Rosman: "If a patient tends to get dry eyes and we don't want it to worsen, or if he has a high-risk job and there's a higher risk of 'traumatising' his eyes post-surgery, Relex Smile would be better for him than Lasik, as there won't be a flap on the cornea."

**If you have a thin cornea and mild myopia**

**TRY: ADVANCED SURFACE ABLATION**

This is another flapless technique that takes 25 minutes for both eyes. Your doctor uses a chemical to remove the cornea's superficial layer before using a laser to reshape it. "You can go for this if your cornea is too thin for Lasik

– we cannot thin the cornea beyond about 0.5mm. But your degree cannot be too high – it should be less than 600 – or the healing process will take longer and there may be scarring on the eye," says Dr Rosman.

Recovery too, is slower, compared to the other procedures – about a week, as it takes time for the surface to heal. "You'll also need to use antibacterial steroid eye drops for a few months, instead of the usual one week," adds Dr Rosman.

**If you have a thin cornea and mild to severe myopia**

**TRY: IMPLANTABLE COLLAMER LENSES**

In this type of surgery, your doctor inserts a lens into the eye, behind the iris and in front of your natural eye lens, explains Dr Rosman. "We don't touch the cornea. You won't feel the lenses or need to take them out – they're permanent insertions." However, your doctor will still be able to remove them if necessary – for example, if you develop a cataract. "We'd have to remove the lenses to perform cataract surgery," says Dr Rosman.

The lenses are customised for you, and can correct myopia as high as 2,000 degrees, which Lasik or Relex Smile can't fix. The procedure takes 30 minutes for both eyes.

"You may experience side effects like high pressure on the eyes or poor night vision. "We also have to size the lenses properly or they may not fit nicely and have to be changed," notes Dr Rosman. But if all goes well, you should get 20/20 vision three to four days after surgery. **SH**

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