



## LASEK

Until recently, if you were one of the millions of people with a refractive error, eyeglasses and contact lenses were the only options for correcting vision. But with the development of refractive surgery, some people with myopia (nearsightedness), hyperopia (farsightedness), or astigmatism (a cornea with unequal curves), can have their vision improved through surgery. If you have thin corneas and are not a candidate for **laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis**, or **LASIK** (a corneal refractive procedure that requires the creation of a partial-thickness flap before the cornea is sculpted with a laser), **laser epithelial keratomileusis (LASEK)** may be a good option for you.

LASEK is usually performed as an outpatient procedure using topical anesthesia with eyedrops. Your ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) uses an alcohol solution to loosen and peel back the **epithelium**, the outermost layer of the cornea, to expose the corneal tissue beneath it. A cool excimer laser is used to permanently reshape the cornea, and the epithelium is either placed back into position, where it will self-adhere, or is removed completely, in which case the epithelium heals inward from the corneal periphery in just a few days.

Reshaping the cornea helps focus light directly onto the retina to produce clearer vision. After the procedure, a transparent “bandage” contact lens is placed on the cornea to promote healing.

As with any surgery, there are certain risks associated with LASEK. Be sure to discuss these possible risks with your ophthalmologist.