

PHOTOREFRACTIVE KERATECTOMY (PRK)

Dr. Rabinowitz is one of the best Los Angeles LASIK surgeons. He also offers other types of laser vision correction for those patients who do not qualify or opt for LASIK surgery, including PRK and LASEK. Patients who are good candidates for PRK are individuals with either thin corneas, slightly irregular corneas, patients with dry eye and individuals who do not want a flap created in their eye. Except for the creation of a flap the two procedures are identical. The advantage of LASIK over PRK is that the visual recovery is faster and there is less postoperative discomfort in the first couple of days. The visual results at 3 months are identical for LASIK and PRK. In the paragraphs below he describes the PRK (PhotoRefractive Keratectomy) procedure. This procedure uses a cold laser beam to reshape the front surface of the cornea and typically takes 30 to 60 seconds depending on the patient's refractive error. Either nearsightedness and astigmatism or farsightedness and astigmatism can be corrected during the same sitting.

Typically the patient enters the laser room, a speculum is put in the eye to prevent the patient from blinking. The patient is then asked to fixate on a red light and the doctor helps the patient by steadying their head. The top layer of the cornea is gently peeled off and the patient fixates on the red light while the ablation is being performed. The ablation is performed on the center of the eye and flattens the cornea thus shortening the eye. Topical anesthetic is put in the eye so the procedure is totally pain free.

At the end of the procedure the eye is washed out with cold water, an antibiotic, an anti-inflammatory drop and a bandage contact lens is put on the eye. The patient is prescribed pain medication in case it should be necessary. The patient is seen by the doctor the following day. The first day after the procedure, the eye feels a bit scratchy and is light sensitive. This improves rapidly and by the third to fourth day, the eye feels very comfortable and the bandage contact lens is removed. Patients typically see improved vision immediately after the procedure, but for maximal vision, it may take 2 to 8 weeks.

A new procedure called LASEK is a modification of the PRK technique. In this procedure the top layer of the cornea is gently peeled off in one piece with alcohol and replaced in its original location, once the laser treatment is complete. The potential advantages of this procedure is quicker visual recovery and less postoperative discomfort.