

UDAY DEVGAN, MD, FACS, FRCS

Consent for Bilateral LASIK

Introduction

LASIK has become the predominant and preferred technique of laser vision correction both within the US and internationally. Laser care may be rendered 'one eye at a time' (called 'consecutive' surgery) or 'both eyes at the same time' (called 'bilateral simultaneous' surgery). There may be risks associated with bilateral simultaneous treatment that are not present when the eyes are treated on different days. **If you elect to have surgery performed on both eyes at the same time, you must understand the possible advantages and disadvantages of your decision.**

ADVANTAGES OF HAVING CONSECUTIVE LASIK INCLUDE:

Safety: The risk of getting an infection in both eyes at the same time will not exist. Although extremely rare, this could lead to significant loss of vision in both eyes. Since the pressure is increased significantly for a short time during the LASIK procedure, there is a very remote possibility of internal bleeding or damage to the retina which could lead to significant loss of vision or even blindness. Should this happen to both eyes, the consequences could be devastating.

It is also possible to develop delayed cloudiness in the cornea or even corneal scarring which is not visible immediately after the procedure. Although this is uncommon and generally clears with time, it can result in significant loss of vision for a prolonged period. Should this occur in both eyes at the same time, carrying out normal activities could be difficult.

Accuracy: The doctor can monitor your healing process in the first eye and may be able to make appropriate modifications to the treatment plan for the second eye if necessary, increasing the likelihood of a better outcome in the second eye.

Visual Recovery: Although most LASIK patients experience a rapid recovery in their vision, the recovery can at times be delayed. If the eyes are operated separately, you can function with your non-operated eye while the first eye recovers. Therefore, you may be able to return to work and drive earlier. This is particularly important if your healing is delayed and vision remains blurred for a prolonged period.

Satisfaction: You will be given the opportunity to determine whether the procedure has produced satisfactory visual results without loss of vision or other undesirable side effects such as glare, ghost images, or increased light sensitivity. If you are over age 40, you will have an opportunity to experience the change in your close vision, which results from the correction of your nearsightedness. This could influence your decision on whether or not to fully correct your other eye to maintain some degree of close vision without the need for reading glasses (monovision).

DISADVANTAGES OF HAVING CONSECUTIVE LASIK INCLUDE:

Convenience: It may be more inconvenient to have each eye treated at separate visits. This will necessitate two periods of recovery from the laser surgery and may require additional time away from work.

Visual Recovery: There will be a potential period of imbalance between your two eyes. This is especially important if you are unable to wear a contact lens in your unoperated eye. It is not usually possible to use the (unaided) operated eye along with a strong corrective lens in glasses for the unoperated eye, because this can create a bothersome sense of imbalance, dizziness, and possibly double vision.

ADVANTAGES OF HAVING BILATERAL SIMULTANEOUS LASIK INCLUDE:

Convenience: It may be more convenient to have both eyes treated during the same visit.

Visual Recovery: The balance in vision between your two eyes will likely be restored more rapidly. This is especially important if you are unable to wear a contact lens in your unoperated eye.

Time Off: If both eyes are treated together and heal normally, you may miss less work.

DISADVANTAGES / RISKS OF HAVING BILATERAL SIMULTANEOUS LASIK INCLUDE:

Safety: The risks of infection, delayed clouding of the cornea, corneal scarring and internal bleeding or retinal damage are very rare but potentially devastating. If these serious but rare complications occur in one eye, they may also occur in the other. Should any of these complications happen, you could experience significant loss of vision or even temporary or permanent legal blindness.

Accuracy: By correcting both eyes simultaneously, there is no opportunity to learn from the healing patterns of the first eye before treating the second eye. Therefore, if there is an overcorrection or undercorrection in one eye, chances are it will happen in both eyes. If a re-treatment is required in one eye, it is quite possible that the other eye will also require a re-treatment.

Visual Recovery: LASIK patients generally experience rapid visual recovery. Some patients, however, can experience delayed visual recovery and experience symptoms such as blurred vision, night glare or ghost images. There is no way of predicting how long your eyes will take to heal, and some of these complications can result in prolonged recovery of normal vision. Patients who heal abnormally have taken several weeks to heal, whether they have surgery on one eye or both eyes. Blurred vision may continue in both eyes from one to two weeks or longer to the point that safe driving may not be possible, and could interfere with your ability to work. The healing corneal flap is most susceptible to trauma during the first several weeks after surgery. Should both flaps become accidentally displaced, significant visual loss in both eyes may result.

Satisfaction: Both eyes tend to experience similar side effects. If you experience any undesirable side effects such as glare, ghost images, increased light sensitivity, or corneal haze in one eye, you will likely experience the same conditions in the other eye. These side effects may cause a decrease in vision or other negative effects, and some patients have elected not to have their second eye treated.

Consent Statement:

"I have read and understand the above risks and benefits of bilateral LASIK, and I understand that this summary does not include a discussion of every possible risk, benefit, and complication that can result from this care. My doctor has answered all of my questions about the LASIK procedure. I wish to have both eyes treated during the same treatment session if my doctor determines that it is safe to do so. This presumes that treatment in the first eye appears to have been technically satisfactory.

The reason(s) I wish to have both eyes treated in the same visit are:

Greater convenience Less time away from work Possible faster recovery

Elimination of possible vision imbalance between treated and untreated eyes

Moderate to extreme difficulty with contact lens wear, and/or contact lens intolerance, with likely inability to comfortably wear a contact lens in my unoperated eye during the recovery period of my first eye.

Other reasons: _____

Signature

Date

Witness

Date