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ICL: Implantable Collamer Lenses Explained

January 14, 2014



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Implantable collamer lenses (ICLs) are perhaps best explained by their better-known alias: implantable contact lenses. This is because ICLs are surgically embedded films of collagen placed beneath the iris, the colored part of your eye. You could think of ICLs, as many do, as implanted contacts.

Once you have been determined to be a candidate, ICL surgery involves a two-step process. First, you visit your doctor, who uses a laser to create one or two small openings in the colored part of your eye to allow fluid to circulate after the

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who uses a laser to create one or two small openings in the colored part of your eye to allow fluid to circulate after the ICL is placed. About two weeks later, you go back to have the ICL implanted.

The implantation involves a small incision and the insertion of a lens specially chosen for your prescription, which unfolds as your doctor inserts it into your eye. The doctor tucks the four corners of the ICL behind your iris, making the lens invisible.

Why get an ICL?

ICLs are attractive options for people who aren't good LASIK candidates. For instance, if you learn at a LASIK consultation that your corneas are too thin or your prescription too strong for laser vision correction, your physician might suggest having an ICL procedure. Not every surgeon is experienced with ICLs, though, so if your physician does not recommend an ICL, you might still be a good candidate but should find a second opinion.

Some people like ICLs because they offer a permanent solution to vision correction, and they can be adjusted or removed if necessary.

ICL vs. LASIK

ICLs and LASIK have many points in common. Both eye surgeries begin with anesthetic eye drops and sometimes a mild sedative. Both correct nearsightedness, though LASIK also corrects astigmatism and farsightedness. The surgeries share a relatively short recovery period of several days, and the overwhelming majority of patients who have either procedure report satisfaction with their results.

If you have been told you are not a LASIK candidate because of a high refractive error or thin cornea, you can learn if you're an ICL candidate by asking your eye doctor or by having a consultation. You'll probably have to ask specifically about ICLs, as a consultation provider might offer other options before ICLs. Listen to each option the doctor presents and select the one with which you feel most comfortable.



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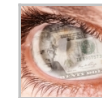
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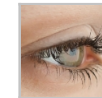
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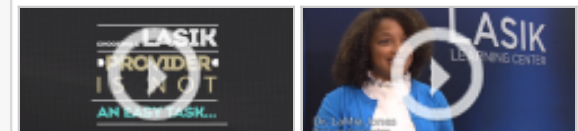
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