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DESCRIPTION OF THE PRK PROCEDURE

Before Your Procedure

You will be asked to arrive 30 minutes prior to your surgery time. It is important that you bring the signed copy of your consent form to the office on your surgery date. Be sure to completely remove all makeup, sunscreen, or moisturizer the night before the procedure. DO NOT apply any make up the morning of your surgery. Additionally, please DO NOT wear earrings to your surgery. DO NOT wear any perfume, cologne, or aftershave the day of your procedure (the alcohol can contaminate the optics of the laser). Eat a light meal within four hours of your procedure. Wear comfortable clothing.

Most patients do not need a sedative prior to their procedure. However, if you are feeling extremely nervous you should mention it when you arrive for your procedure so that oral Valium can be provided for you. One of our surgical technicians will escort you to the laser suite.

During Your Procedure

In the laser suite, you will be seated in a reclining chair. The technician will place a bonnet on your head to cover your hair. A shield will be placed over the non-operative eye. A numbing drop will be placed in the operative eye. The reclining chair will be tilted back and you will be carefully positioned with a support under your neck in order to help keep your head steady. Your eyelid will be washed gently with a mild iodine antiseptic and dried with a cotton tip applicator. During this time of preparation, you may hear some "clicks" coming from laser as we are completing some of the final calibrations. You may also hear some "buzzing noises" as the doctor completes the final checks on the equipment. The technician will then place an eye drape on your eyelid in order to protect your eyelashes. Another eye drop will be placed in your eye at this time to keep the cornea moist. You will then be carefully placed under the laser and the blinking red fixation light will be demonstrated to you.

The doctor will then place a lid holder in your eye to prevent you from blinking during the procedure. The lid holder also removes the excess fluid from around your eye during the procedure so you may hear a "hissing" noise as the fluid is removed. More numbing drops will be placed in your eye.

Next, the doctor will prepare your cornea for laser treatment by gently polishing away the outer layers of the cornea. You will then concentrate on the center part of the now "blurry red fixation light". It is important that you hold your fixation steady during the laser treatment. If the fixation light appears to move or drift during the treatment, DO NOT follow it. Instead, keep your gaze steady. The doctor will be observing your eye very closely during the procedure and if you lose fixation, he will stop the laser. The doctor can start or stop the laser as needed. When the laser treatment is completed, the doctor will moisten the eye with some fluid and you will probably hear the same "hissing" sound as the excess is drawn away from the eye. Several eye drops will be placed in your eye and the doctor will place a contact lens on your eye to help protect it as it heals. This contact lens will remain on the eye for two to four days, and will be removed in our office once the cornea has healed. The doctor will then very carefully remove the lid holder and will ask you to blink your eye several times.

After The Procedure

We will ask you to keep your eyes closed while we move you away from the laser. If you are having both eyes operated on, we will then place a shield on the eye just completed and the procedure will be duplicated for your second eye. Upon completion of the procedure, the shield will be removed from your eye and the reclining chair will be brought up to the sitting position. You will be asked to keep your eyes closed until the technician helps you move from the laser chair to the examination chair where the doctor will make a final check of your eye(s). The doctor will then review with you the written postoperative instructions that are included with this document. It is important that you follow your postoperative instructions. If you have any questions, please contact our office at 415-474-3333.

Practicing for the LASER

Nonetheless, one of the most important aspects of your laser vision correction procedure is your ability to continuously look at the blinking red "fixation" light. Our laser now has an automatic eye-tracker device. Some patients find it helpful to begin "fixation training" several days before the procedure. Choose a small display light on your VCR or other appliance, and (with both eyes open) cover one eye and practice "fixating" on that light for about 60 seconds. Then cover and practice with your fellow eye. Do not be concerned about blinking, as there will be a "lid holder" placed during the procedure to keep your eyelids apart. Practice this "fixation training" twice daily for a few days prior to your procedure.