

Healthy You

FAST FACTS FOR YOUR HEALTH

Q&A with Dr. Chad: What to Expect During a LASIK Procedure

Laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis — more commonly known as LASIK — is a type of laser eye surgery that corrects vision problems by changing the shape of your cornea, giving patients clear vision without glasses or contact lenses.

Is LASIK in your foreseeable future? Dr. Chad Overman, Delta Dental of Iowa's medical expert for DeltaVision®, shares answers to common LASIK questions below.

Q: How can patients find a reputable LASIK provider?

Dr. Overman: A good starting point is your friends who have had LASIK. Ask where they went and get their honest opinion on how the experience went. If you don't know anyone who has had LASIK, you'll need to do a bit more research. Call LASIK provider offices, and ask what their success rate is and how they define it.

Q: Are certain people not good candidates for LASIK?

Dr. Overman: LASIK is not for everyone. Your vision prescription matters greatly in terms of whether you're a good candidate. Also, the thickness of your cornea matters because if it's too thin, you will not be able to have LASIK done. Ask your surgeon if there are other options for refractive surgery for you, if your cornea is too thin for LASIK.

Q: How do I know if I'm a good candidate for LASIK?

Dr. Overman: The best way to know whether LASIK is right for you is discussing it with a qualified vision provider, such as an ophthalmologist (OMD) or optometrist (OD).

Q: What are the LASIK side effects I should understand?

Dr. Overman: There is discomfort and blurry vision for the first 24-48 hours. Lighting may also bother you for the first few days, but sunglasses help.

Q: Is LASIK a permanent vision correction solution? Or will I have to get maintenance procedures or wear corrective lenses on occasion?

Dr. Overman: This is very dependent upon your age and vision prescription. It is possible you could get many years of quality vision with LASIK, but once we get to our mid-40s, near vision will start to be an issue for LASIK patients just like it is for everyone else. You will need reading glasses after LASIK once you are in your mid-40s.

Q: Will my vision insurance cover LASIK? How do I find out?

Dr. Overman: All of DeltaVision's plans cover 85% of retail price or 95% of promotional price for a LASIK procedure.

Q: Does the LASIK procedure hurt?

Dr. Overman: No, very few patients have described it as painful. However, there may be some discomfort during the procedure.

Q: What is the LASIK recovery experience like?

Dr. Overman: Within 48 hours, you should start to see clearer. The amount of swelling is different for everyone, and the use of eye drops prescribed by your surgeon may be longer for some. You will need someone to drive you home the day of surgery, but most people do quite well after the procedure.

Q: Are there any other key points about LASIK that patients should understand before undergoing the procedure?

Dr. Overman: Ask your surgeon if LASIK is the best refractive surgery for you. There are some alternative options out there that may be better for you. Far-sighted people need to be more aware that LASIK may not be right for them.

If you are in your late-30s or older and do not need to wear your glasses to read clearly at arm's length, LASIK may not be right for you, as you are trading better distance vision for upcoming poor near vision. Make sure you talk to a vision provider about all of your options before deciding upon a procedure.

SOURCE:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/lasik-eye-surgery/about/pac-20384774>

Essential Oils and Oral Health: Does Natural Mean Safe?

Many of us are looking for ways to live cleaner, less toxic lives, and essential oils may help toward that goal. Essential oils are extracted from plants and have been used for centuries for their medicinal properties.

Essential oils are available in thousands of different formulations, each with their own benefits. Some people swear by essential oils as an alternative to traditional medical treatments, sometimes using them topically (on the skin) or in food and drink, while others simply enjoy them for their pleasant aroma.

With essential oils growing in popularity, you may wonder if any might help boost your oral health. But before you explore the possibilities, please keep three key points front of mind:

1. Always talk to your doctor and dentist before consuming essential oils or using them on your skin.
2. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, it's especially important to inform your medical providers if you are planning to consume or use essential oils topically, as they may affect your growing baby or transfer to your breastmilk.

3. Keep essential oils out of reach from children or pets, as essential oils may pose dangers to them.

How Essential Oils May Help Oral Health

Some essential oils have properties that support good oral health. These oils include

- Tea tree, eucalyptus, cinnamon, clove and lemon: These oils have antibacterial properties, so they may help keep the bacteria that leads to cavities and gum disease at bay. Related to their antibacterial properties, these oils may also help freshen breath. Many are also antifungal, so they may treat thrush, which is a fungal infection in the mouth.
- Peppermint: It likely comes as no surprise that peppermint oil is well known for its ability to eliminate bad breath.
- Lavender: This type of oil might not be used in a mouthwash, toothpaste or other dental care product, but lavender oil is helpful at reducing stress and promotes relaxation. If you're anxious about a dental visit, bringing lavender essential oil to smell when anxiety hits may help you feel more at ease.

With the growing popularity of essential oils, you may find brands of toothpaste and mouthwash using essential oils in their products to appeal to people who want a more natural alternative. If you have any questions about their safety or effectiveness, your dentist can help clear any confusion.

Side Effects of Essential Oils

Just because essential oils are derived from natural sources does not mean they are completely safe, and this is especially true for children and pets. Always read the instruction labels (this should include whether the oil should be consumed/diluted) and talk to your doctor before using an essential oil, especially if you plan to consume them or use them on your skin.

The side effects below are most common if an essential oil is consumed or applied in your mouth:

- Heartburn
- Vomiting and nausea
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Dry mouth (which can lead to cavities if not treated, as saliva helps wash harmful bacteria away)
- Teeth and gum damage
- Allergic skin rashes and burns when used on the skin

In severe cases, essential oil use can cause abdominal pain, poisoning, seizures and organ damage.

Seeking nature-derived alternatives in your daily living is a great goal for overall health and wellness, but these products are not without side effects. Keeping your doctor and dentist informed of your new choices and products will give you the confidence that your lifestyle choices are safe for you and your family.