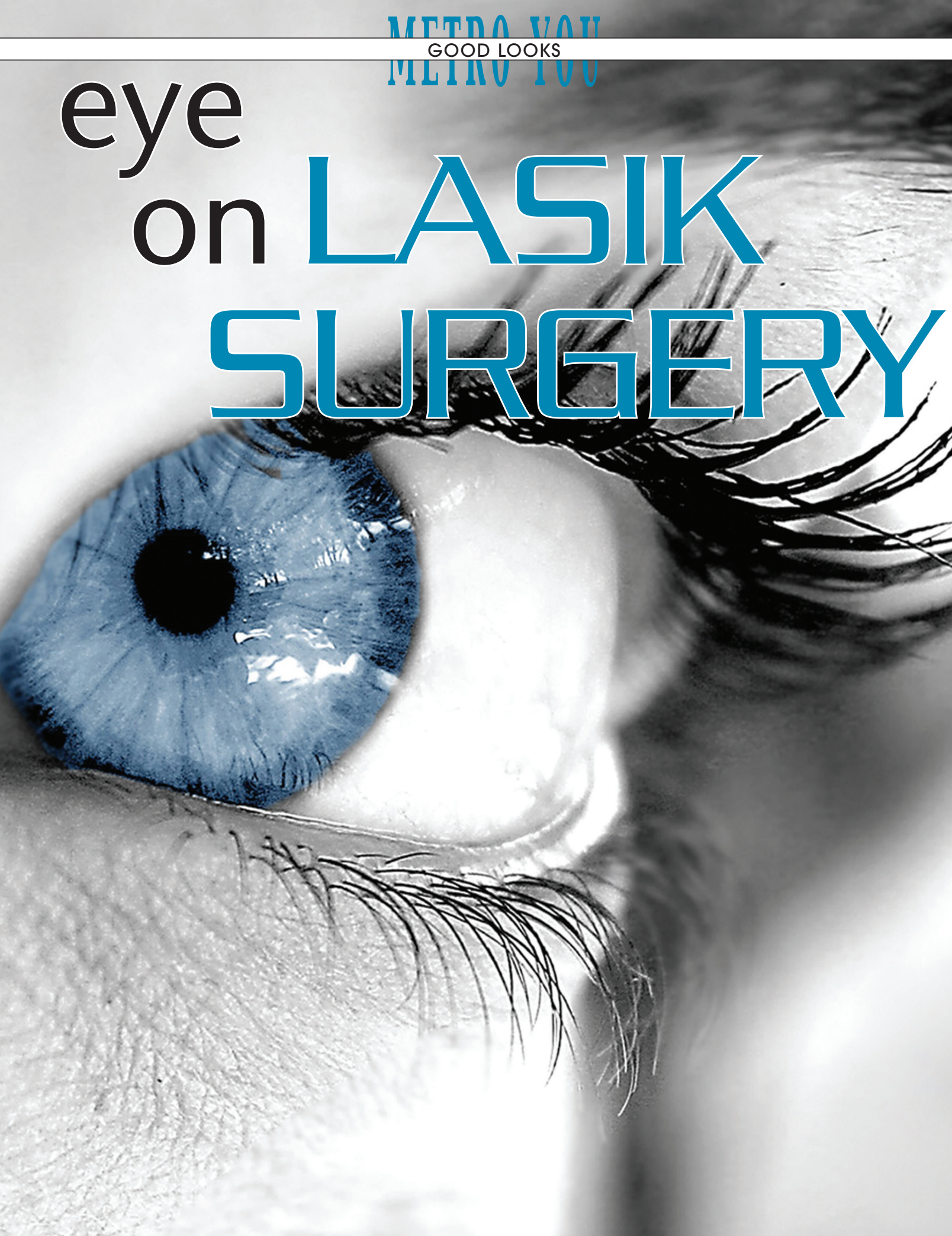


eye

on

# LASIK SURGERY



**A**lthough the variety and selection of fashionable eyewear seems to be at an all time high right now, sometimes a glasses-wearing girl just wants to be the hot girl without glasses. The option of LASIK surgery seems to be splashed everywhere you turn – print media, television, radio and the internet. However, taking the plunge into LASIK surgery can be intimidating because of confusing information and the many misconceptions that are out there. The challenge is to make an educated decision as to whether or not a surgical procedure for your vision is right for you. Only ophthalmologists with specific training in refractive surgery should perform this procedure. According to Dr. Michelle Akler, M.D., of Castleman Eye Center ([www.castlemanmedical.com](http://www.castlemanmedical.com)), when patients are under the care of a highly qualified surgeon, LASIK complications are reduced and there is a high success and satisfaction rate among patients following the surgery.

LASIK is an abbreviation for “laser-assisted in situ keratomileusis”. It is a type of laser refractive eye surgery designed to change the shape of the cornea to eliminate or reduce the need for glasses and contact lenses. The cornea is the transparent tissue over the front of the eyeball, covering the iris and the pupil. During LASIK surgery, a thin layer of the cornea is sliced with a laser to remove tissue, which reshapes the cornea and improves its power to focus. A great resource for LASIK information, from guidelines about finding a qualified surgeon to possible surgical risks to an animation showing exactly how the surgery is performed, is available on the Food & Drug Administration website at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov). The LASIK animation is a realistic, eye-opening experience for anyone considering the surgery and is highly recommended viewing.

The popularity of laser refractive surgery has increased significantly over the past decade and millions of these procedures have been successfully performed throughout the United States – although it

is still important to do your research and find a qualified surgeon. Once a surgeon has been selected, they must determine if the patient is a good candidate for LASIK surgery. According to Dr. Akler, a thorough eye exam is the first step in determining if LASIK is right for a particular patient. The exam will determine if the eyes are healthy, confirm the current vision prescription and verify that there are no current health conditions prohibiting the patient from being an appropriate candidate. For example, patients who have dry eyes (often related to autoimmune disease), are pregnant or have breastfed within the past three months (hormones can impact your vision) are not good candidates for the procedure. Once it has been determined that a patient is a good candidate for LASIK, the surgery is scheduled – most typically as an outpatient procedure. After the surgery, patients must go home to rest; however, by the next day most patients have functional vision and some can even drive to their follow-up visit the day after surgery. Dr. Akler recommends follow-up visits for a year after LASIK to insure that the surgery was successful and that late changes in the eyes have not occurred. Per Dr. Akler, standard follow-up procedure for LASIK patients at Castleman Eye Center is four visits in the year following surgery and these visits are part of the original fee.

Once again, it is important to do your research prior to any type of surgery. Dr. Akler warns that the least expensive LASIK offer guaranteeing success and “too good to be true” promises will not always result in the best outcome for the patient. If you do decide to proceed with LASIK surgery, your cost savings will come from not having to purchase glasses or contact lenses again – not from going with the low cost provider. So, if you decide to become the girl who no longer wears glasses or contacts, be the smart girl who makes an informed decision about something as critical as your vision.

*Tracy Donohue  
Metro You Magazine*

## WHAT IS AN OPTOMETRIST?

First, let's start with the basics. Per The American Optometric Association ([www.aoa.org](http://www.aoa.org)), an optometrist is a Doctor of Optometry (O.D.). An O.D. is a health care professional licensed to provide primary eye care services such as eye exams, diagnosis of visual conditions such as nearsightedness (trouble seeing distant objects), farsightedness (trouble seeing object up close), astigmatism (trouble seeing fine details up close or at a distance), etc. Additionally, an optometrist can prescribe vision correction such as glasses, contact lenses, vision rehabilitation and medication as well as perform minor surgical procedures such as removing foreign objects from the eye. To become an optometrist, one must complete four years of professional education in a college of optometry following the completion of an undergraduate degree. Some optometrists also do a residency.

## WHAT IS AN OPHTHALMOLOGIST?

Per the American Academy of Ophthalmology ([www.aaoo.org](http://www.aaoo.org)) an ophthalmologist is an eye M.D., a medical doctor who is specialized in eye and vision care. Ophthalmologists are trained to provide a complete range of eye care, from prescribing glasses and contact lenses to treating eye diseases and performing complex and delicate eye surgery – for example refractive and/or LASIK surgery; ophthalmologists may also be involved in eye research. To become an ophthalmologist, one must complete four years of medical school and a year of internship plus spend a minimum of three years residency in ophthalmology and possibly more for training in a subspecialty.

