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How Much Does Laser Eye Surgery Typically Cost?

By Gray Rollins

The cost of laser eye surgery can vary greatly depending on the type of surgery to be performed, the patient's prescription, the equipment used, and the doctor or surgical provider in question. There are also notable regional differences in the cost of laser eye surgery, with some parts of the United States charging higher fees than other regions of the country. Nonetheless, there are several trends in the cost of laser eye surgery that appear to be consistent regardless of the type of surgery performed, the individual provider, and the location.

First, all laser eye surgery prices are quoted at a cost per eye. This is due to the fact that some patients do not require surgery in both eyes. Patients who are seeking surgery in both eyes must keep in mind that the price they are quoted will need to be doubled if the surgery is to cover both their left and right eyes.

Another trend shows that laser eye surgery prices have been on the rise for the past several years. Technological advances resulting in innovative new equipment and procedures have increased the success of laser eye surgery and reduced the incidence of side effects resulting from the procedure. However, these advances require surgical providers to purchase expensive new equipment and enroll in costly training courses that increase the provider's expenses. This cost increase is frequently passed along to the consumer, with the result being an increase in surgery prices. For example, LASIK procedures using IntraLase technology, a method in which the corneal flap is created with a laser instead of a microkeratome, generally increases the cost \$250 to \$500 per eye. Customized procedures which use wavefront technology to more effectively map the surface of the eye also increase costs.

In fact, studies have shown that the average national cost of laser eye surgery has been rising at a rate of about 15–20% each year for the past 3–4 years. Currently, the average cost for LASIK surgery is \$1,800 to \$2,000 per eye while LASEK surgery costs \$1,700 – \$2,000 per eye. A PRK procedure costs \$1,200 – \$1,800 per eye.

Laser eye surgery becomes more costly as the patient's prescription worsens. Individuals requiring minor corrections to their sight frequently only require a single brief procedure. Patients with strong

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prescriptions have a much higher risk of needing multiple procedures in order to get the desired results, as well having a greater risk of complications such as visual disturbances. For this reason, many laser eye surgery providers charge based on the prescription strength.

As briefly mentioned above, there are regional differences in the cost of laser eye surgery in the United States. Although the average cost of the procedures varied little from region to region, the differences between the minimum and maximum fees varied greatly depending on the location in which the surgery was performed.

A study performed by the national publication Review of Ophthalmology showed that the Southern and Northeastern U.S. averaged a slightly higher cost for LASIK and LASEK surgeries, at approximately \$1,900 – \$2,000 per eye, than procedures performed in the Midwest or West, at approximately \$1,800 to \$1,900 per eye. Yet the Northeast, Midwest, and West regions have large price ranges. The minimum price per eye in the Northeast was \$1,250 while the maximum cost was twice the cost at

\$2,500. Prices in the Midwest ranged from a low of \$1,300 per eye to \$2,400 per eye. Most shocking though were laser eye surgeries in the West: the lowest cost provider charged just \$900 per eye, while the most expensive provider charged a whopping \$2,750 per eye - a difference of \$1,850 per eye. There were little price variations in the Southern United States.

Individuals interested in pursuing laser eye surgery should pay close attention to what costs are included in their provider's quote. There is little standardization in the industry in regards to how procedures are priced, so patients may find that a lower cost provider advertises a nominal rate only to hit them up for extra fees later on. In the end, the final cost often works out to be the same, if not more expensive, than other all-inclusive providers.

When interviewing a provider, patients should inquire about the following charges:

– Pre-operative testing – Initial exam charges – Supply fees (surgical gowns, masks, gloves, temporary contact lenses, etc.) – Doctor's fees – Equipment rental fees (for doctors who rent or lease their equipment) – Medication costs – Follow-up visit costs – Charges for any necessary follow-up procedures or enhancements

Finally, keep in mind that many providers offer financing programs for individuals undergoing laser eye surgery. This may be a solution for some individuals, so patients should be sure to inquire about available options if paying for the procedure in a lump sum will cause financial hardship.

Gray Rollins is a featured writer for MyEyeSurgery. To learn more about the cost of eye surgery, visit

<http://www.myeyesurgery.com/costoflasikeyesurgery/>

and

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LASIK Surgery – How The Excimer Laser Works

By Nicola Kennedy

The Excimer laser is a form of ultraviolet chemical laser, and is the key element that has made laser eye surgery possible. Though Excimer laser was originally used in semiconductor manufacturing in the 1970s, its use in eye surgery is now fairly widespread. While working at the IBM research laboratories in 1982, Dr. Rangaswamy Srinivasin and his research team discovered the potential of the Excimer laser in interacting with biological tissue. An ophthalmologist, Dr. Steven Trokel, explained its connection with the corneal tissue. And this was how LASIK eye surgery came into existence.

There are several types of lasers, but excimer is the preferred choice when it comes to corrective eye surgery. This is due to the fact that excimer is the most technologically advanced laser type. The excimer laser is, literally, a cool laser. That is, it precisely removes the desired part of the corneal tissue, without heating up or damaging the adjacent tissue. Quite amazingly, the excimer laser is so precise that it is capable of removing 0.5% of a human hair's width at a time. That fact itself is enough for patients to believe that excimer-assisted eye surgery is not a gimmick, but a true technology leveraged procedure.

With the computer technology at its disposal and the precision offered by the laser, LASIK surgery has emerged as the number one choice for patients with refractive error. Since the excimer laser emits cool, minute beams that make precise incisions on the surface of the cornea, a dedicated technician operates the machine while the ophthalmologist performs the surgery.

Your eyes are your window to the world and your sight is the most important of the five senses. Hence, it is all the more imperative that, if need be, you go for an eye surgery that is reliable and has minimal side effects. With the high-precision technology of the excimer laser and the overall reliability of the procedure, LASIK is the most prevalent of corrective eye surgeries.

Nicola Kennedy publishes articles and reports and provides news, information and views about Lasik Eye Surgery and the background and

history of laser eye surgery

at Your Lasik Information.

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