
The myth of \$499 Lasik

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LASIK, Custom Lasik and other types of LASIK Eye Surgery are procedures that are safe, effective and predictable when performed by an experienced LASIK surgeon for carefully selected and counseled patients with realistic goals. One of the most important roles a LASIK surgeon and their staff must fulfill is providing a thorough examination and LASIK consultation to make certain that you are a good LASIK candidate and have clear vision correction goals.

Unfortunately, low price LASIK advertising may over influence some patients and subject them to less than ideal behavior.

A common misperception is that going to a practice or center that advertises low cost LASIK or discount LASIK means that a patient will in fact get low fees.

Most often low cost LASIK or discount LASIK advertisements that seem to offer a low price have neglected to disclose the terms and conditions a patient must meet to get that low price for LASIK. That is, they fail to fully disclose the true cost of LASIK by cleverly hiding certain eligibility requirements to obtain the low price, or failing to include the actual cost of the LASIK consultation, necessary follow-up care, and even enhancements. They will gladly include these services, but at an additional charge, which is only fully disclosed when you attend the consultation. Often the add on charges for the proper and necessary follow-up care, consultation and enhancements make the actual total fee equal or exceed the comprehensive fee charged by local well known and trusted LASIK surgeons.

Some guidelines for you to use when evaluating LASIK fees include:

1. NEVER agree to give a LASIK center or practice a non-refundable "deposit" to "hold" a consultation appointment for you. This is a sales

tactic to entice you to come into the center so that you can be "upsold" a higher procedure fee using high-pressure sales tactics. Patients who provide a credit card online or by phone often feel an obligation to go forward as they have already invested money just to find out what their actual fee will be. This scenario is NOT an uncommon practice. YOU should NOT have to pay a fee to find out what your procedure fee will be.

2. ALWAYS be clear that the low LASIK price advertised applies to YOUR actual prescription. Many discount LASIK centers advertise a low price that only applies to a limited mild prescription range and often does not include treatment for astigmatism unless again it is very mild. If you do not fall into the limited prescription range covered by the low price advertised, then of course they will add on additional fees. Again, this can make the actual fee you will pay approach that of local and trusted LASIK surgeons.

3. ALWAYS be clear that the low LASIK price advertised includes an accepted, medically prudent series of follow-up visits. It is inappropriate for a discount center to ONLY include 1 or 2 follow-up visits and then tell you "call us" if you have any problems. If in fact you wait to discover problems, often they have proceeded to become more severe than if you were being carefully followed and observed. It is NOT your job as the patient to diagnose and judge when you have a sensation or vision change that is "bad enough" to schedule a follow-up visit. This is especially true if there is an add on fee for this follow-up series of visits or even for an individual visit. You may be hesitant to use good judgment and go in for an extra appointment if there is an additional fee involved. For this reason it is best to have ALL of your follow-up visits included in the total fee that you are charged. Again, this can make the actual fee you will

pay for your discount LASIK approach that of local and trusted LASIK surgeons.

4. ALWAYS be clear that the low LASIK price advertised includes providing medically necessary enhancements within at least the first 12 months after your treatment. Virtually all enhancements, if they are necessary at all, are performed within the first 12 months and are usually performed with the first 3-4 months after your treatment. If the low price LASIK advertised does NOT include enhancements, then of course they will add on additional fees. Again, this can make the actual fee you will pay approach that of local and trusted LASIK surgeons.

What is the Best Approach for Making LASIK affordable?

LASIK is affordable and can be readily available to almost all patients by taking advantage of extended monthly payment plans. The best approach is to choose a LASIK surgeon based on their reputation and the confidence and competence they and their staff convey to you during your consultation. You should have in mind an affordable payment that would be comfortable for you to pay each month. The Refractive Surgery Coordinator in the practice can then select an extended payment plan that fits your budgeted payment amount. Most of these plans require no money down and there are options, which are interest free depending on what your specific situation is. The most important decision you need to make is choosing a LASIK surgeon. A trustworthy LASIK surgeon will help you select a procedure that is best for you. Then the Refractive Surgery Coordinator will discuss the fee and arrange the payment schedule that works best for you. This is the best way to get high quality care and not be subjected to "up selling" sales pressure tactics.