



Alan G. Salz, MD

How Safe Is LASIK Surgery?

Most patients who come to our practice already know that LASIK is a surgical procedure and therefore has risks. Two common concerns are night vision and dry eyes. Perhaps one way to answer these issues is to relate the story of one of his recent patients – **Dr. Salz's daughter, Lauren.**

Lauren is a freshman at Barnard College of Columbia University in New York City. Some of our readers may already be familiar with Lauren as she was featured on a front page Courier News article about the Salz family medical mission to Ghana last summer performing sight-restoring eye surgery. Lauren had spent the three previous months working in an orphanage and living in a mud hut in rural northern Ghana.

Having needed eyeglasses or contact lenses since she was in the fifth grade, Lauren expressed an interest in laser vision correction this spring. Lauren first had to undergo the same thorough eye evaluation and discussion that Dr. Salz performs on all of his laser vision correction patients. Lauren was happy to find out she was a candidate although her father warned her that because of her large pupils and prescription she was at increased risk of noticing aberrations around lights at night following LASIK. As typical of many of our patients with nearsightedness and astigmatism, she was aware of extra images around lights as part of her natural vision with contacts and glasses before the procedure. She also found her eyes felt dry after wearing her contact lenses for several hours. Lauren decided herself she wanted to go ahead with LASIK.

Perhaps having talked to numerous family friends and two other close relatives that had their eyes corrected by her father, Lauren was completely calm for her procedure. She opted to skip the Xanax offered patients pre-op and found the laser experience to be straightforward. "My father and the staff at the New Jersey Eye Laser Institute walked me through the whole process and made it easy for me," Lauren states. Dr. Salz selected all-laser Intralase LASIK with Customvue technology to program the excimer laser. "Because of Lauren's prescription and large pupil size, I adjusted the parameters on the Customvue treatment to widen the optical zone," explains Dr. Salz. "I routinely make these changes to reduce the chance of night vision issues for our patients. I created the LASIK flap with the Intralase laser which is the safest way to do the first part of the procedure," he added.

By the next day, Lauren was already seeing 20/20 and was thrilled with her new vision. Within a short period of time she could tell her vision was better than with her contact lenses and she no longer found her eyes tired at the end of the day. She feels her night vision has actually improved compared with before. Asked about what she thought of her result, she replied, "I love waking up and being able to see well."

Although Lauren's experience is only one story, it represents a strong statement of Dr. Salz's confidence in his own surgical skills and the safety of modern LASIK technology.



Lauren in Ghana Summer 2007



Dr. Salz & Lauren right after her LASIK procedure