



## seeing clearly now

Laser vision correction is a growing part of many moms' postpartum process

Story by Rachel Naud

Photos courtesy Lasik MD & Leslie Fenster

Leslie Fenster saw the light about two years ago. The 37-year-old office manager, fed up with the hassle and clumsiness of glasses, finally underwent laser vision correction two years ago after having her third child.

And she hasn't looked back.

"Basically I felt by my third child, my glasses were in the way and I was never able to manage contacts," says Fenster, whose kids are now ages four, seven and nine.

"Also, having young kids, they were always pulling at my glasses or I would take them off because my kids were pulling at me. I felt like it would be a nice opportunity to not have to wear

glasses. And esthetically, I thought it looked nicer."

Wanting to look better is one of the main reasons postpartum women choose laser vision correction, say experts.

It's often a transitional period in a woman's life where she could be taking a different career path, or simply wants to feel better about herself while she's trying to shed the baby weight and get back on track.

"A lot of people come to us after they're pregnant because they notice during their pregnancy what a hassle it was to deal with glasses and contact lenses," says Dr. Avi Wallerstein, co-founder of Lasik MD.

"Postpartum, people want to look good. Combine that with, during pregnancy, they realize how uncomfortable it was, what a hassle it was, or how often they couldn't wear their contact lenses."

While the temptation might be there to undergo the procedure sooner than later, Wallerstein recommends waiting until after giving birth before making any decision.

Due to hormonal changes, a woman's eyesight can fluctuate throughout her pregnancy — even to the point where there is a change in her prescription. These changes are usually temporary, with eyesight returning to normal postpartum.

"Because laser eye surgery is permanent, it's a

Top: Leslie Fenster, a 37-year-old office manager, underwent laser eye surgery two years ago after having her third child.

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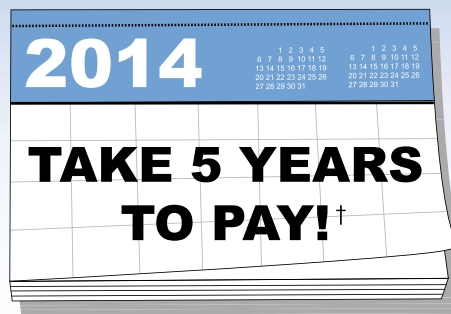
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change that really lasts a lifetime. I wouldn't want to do it when things are variable," says Wallerstein.

In addition, although most women only have to put antibiotic drops in their eyes post laser surgery, in the rare case something happens and the woman has to take stronger medication, it could harm the baby.

Pregnancy also often causes dry eyes in women — so much so that contact lenses are often too uncomfortable to wear. That could pose additional difficulties for women recovering from laser vision correction, leading to longer, more troublesome recovery periods.

"We wouldn't want to put them in that situation," says Wallerstein.

"So we don't actually perform the procedure during the time that someone is pregnant, and not until a month or two after the delivery to make sure the vision is stabilized."

The good news for moms who are ready to undergo laser vision correction is it's safer today than ever before.

Newer imaging technology can now determine the health of the cornea and better advise doctors

on who is really a good candidate for the surgery.

In addition, the lasers now have a higher level of precision.

"The laser is now able to treat based on those specifics of your eye," says Wallerstein. "It has very much tailored to what your vision is. This is led to an increase in accuracy and precision of the surgery."

Although Wallerstein says laser eye surgery cannot prevent or rectify any kind of eye disease, it can restore eyesight to 20/20 vision.

Fenster's eyesight has been restored to 20/20 vision. Yet more than that, the procedure has helped her envision a simpler future.

"It's made my life easier," she says. "I don't have to go to the eye doctor. I can see when I'm driving. I don't have to worry about losing my glasses. We're all busy people and this is one less thing to worry about."

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**Right:** Advancements in laser eye correction technology is allowing doctors to tailor treatments to the specifics of patients' eyes.

