

SNU Eye Clinic: Not Every Eye Is Suitable for SMILE Surgery

SNU Eye Clinic highlights why comprehensive eye examinations are essential to determine whether SMILE surgery or another vision correction option is best.

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA, June 30, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As interest in SMILE surgery continues to grow worldwide, more patients are considering laser vision correction to reduce their dependence on glasses and contact lenses. However, ophthalmologists emphasize that SMILE surgery is not suitable for every patient. Determining the most appropriate treatment requires a comprehensive evaluation of factors such as corneal thickness, eye anatomy, and overall ocular health.

[Dr. Chung Eui Sang](#), Chief Director of [SNU Eye Clinic](#) in Gangnam, Seoul, South Korea, explained, "SMILE surgery is a safe and highly effective vision correction procedure with excellent patient satisfaction. However, the most appropriate surgical method varies depending on each patient's eye condition. Comprehensive diagnostic testing is essential to determine the safest and most effective treatment for every individual."

Dr. Chung is recognized as one of the pioneering ophthalmologists who introduced SMILE surgery to Korea and has participated in clinical research on the next-generation laser vision correction procedure, [SMILE Pro](#). He has also contributed to the early adoption and advancement of Toric Implantable Collamer Lens (Toric ICL) surgery in Korea, accumulating extensive clinical experience across a broad range of vision correction procedures.



Dr. Chung Eui Sang, Chief Director of SNU Eye Clinic, emphasizes the importance of comprehensive eye examinations to determine the most appropriate vision correction procedure for each patient.

SMILE surgery is a minimally invasive laser vision correction procedure performed using the VisuMax 500 femtosecond laser system. The laser creates a thin lenticule within the corneal stroma without creating a large corneal flap. The lenticule is then removed through a small incision of approximately 2 mm to reshape the cornea and correct refractive errors. Compared with conventional LASIK and LASEK, SMILE surgery preserves more of the corneal surface, allowing for faster visual recovery and reducing the likelihood of postoperative dry eye symptoms. These advantages have contributed to its growing popularity worldwide.

However, successful long-term outcomes depend on careful patient selection. Because the procedure removes corneal tissue, patients must have sufficient residual corneal thickness to maintain the structural stability of the cornea after surgery. Eligibility cannot be determined solely by the degree of myopia or astigmatism. Instead, ophthalmologists evaluate corneal thickness, corneal shape, intraocular pressure, and the overall structure of the eye before recommending surgery.

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The goal is not simply to perform SMILE surgery, but to identify the vision correction procedure that is safest and most appropriate for each patient's eyes.”

Dr. Chung Eui Sang

disorder, are generally not suitable candidates for laser vision correction and require individualized treatment planning.

When SMILE surgery is not recommended, alternative procedures such as LASEK, Implantable Collamer Lens (ICL) surgery, or SMILE Pro may be considered. In particular, ICL surgery corrects



The VisuMax femtosecond laser system used for SMILE surgery at SNU Eye Clinic enables minimally invasive vision correction through a small corneal incision.

vision without removing corneal tissue, making it an effective option for patients with thin corneas, high myopia, or high astigmatism.

SNU Eye Clinic provides personalized vision correction solutions through dedicated programs for SMILE surgery, SMILE Pro, and ICL surgery, enabling ophthalmologists to recommend the most appropriate treatment based on each patient's individual eye condition. For patients with high astigmatism, the clinic performs detailed analyses of the astigmatic axis and ocular rotational movement to develop individualized Zero Toric ICL surgical plans designed to minimize lens rotation while maximizing surgical precision.

"The most important goal is not performing a specific procedure, but identifying the vision correction method that is best suited to each patient," said Dr. Chung Eui Sang, Chief Director of SNU Eye Clinic.

"By accurately evaluating corneal thickness and overall eye health through comprehensive examinations, we can recommend the most appropriate treatment—whether that is SMILE surgery, SMILE Pro, ICL surgery, or another vision correction procedure—to help patients achieve the best possible visual outcomes."

SNU Eye Clinic also operates a dedicated international patient center, providing multilingual consultation services in English, Chinese, Mongolian, and other languages. The clinic continues to expand its personalized vision correction programs for international patients seeking advanced ophthalmic care in South Korea.

Samantha

SNU Eye Clinic

+82 10-5495-9632

snueye@snuseoul.com

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Dr. Chung Eui Sang, Chief Director of SNU Eye Clinic, advocates comprehensive eye evaluations before selecting SMILE surgery or other vision correction procedures.

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