

Cataract Surgery

Correcting Cloudy Vision

Cataract Surgery

If you have a cataract, your eye care provider will monitor it and recommend treatment. Your cataract may continue to grow.

If it starts to interfere with your daily activities, your eye care provider may recommend surgery to remove it and restore clear vision. Most surgeries are done on an outpatient basis. This means patients don't have to stay overnight in a hospital.

During cataract surgery, an eye surgeon removes the cloudy lens. Most of the time it is replaced by an implant. The new implant, called an intraocular lens, improves vision about 95 percent of the time.

Depending on your situation, you may still need glasses after surgery.

Types of Cataract Surgery

There are two main types of cataract surgery used today. For both types, you can be either awake or asleep. Both surgeries are basically painless.

- **Phacoemulsification (phaco), or small incision surgery**

Your eye surgeon will make a small incision on the side of your cornea. The surgeon slips a tiny probe into your eye. The probe sends ultrasound waves to the cloudy part of your lens. The waves soften and break up the cataract so it can be removed by suction.

- **Extracapsular surgery**

Your eye surgeon will use a slightly longer incision to remove the hard center of your lens. The surgeon then manually removes the rest of the lens.

Most people will receive an implant after the cataract is removed. Some people cannot have an implant because of eye disease or other reasons. They may instead wear a soft contact lens or get a new prescription for their glasses.

(over)

What to Expect After Surgery

Complete healing from cataract surgery takes about 6 weeks. Your vision may be blurry at first. Right after surgery, you may have itching or minor discomfort. You may notice some fluid discharge.

Your eye care provider may have you:

- wear an eye patch or glasses
- use special eye drops
- avoid bending or lifting heavy objects while your eye heals
- take over-the-counter pain medicine for minor discomfort.

Your eye care provider may give you other instructions.

There are risks to cataract surgery, but they are rare. They include infection, bleeding, pain, redness, swelling, vision loss or light flashes.

'After-cataracts' and YAG Laser Procedure

During cataract surgery, eye surgeons leave the capsule of your lens intact. Months or years after cataract surgery, the capsule can become cloudy, causing vision problems. This kind of cloudy vision is easily corrected. An eye surgeon will use a laser beam of light to make a tiny hole in the capsule to let in light. This is a painless, outpatient procedure.

**Information adapted from the
National Eye Institute of the
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