

Cataract Surgery

Patient information leaflet – before and after your operation

What a cataract is

A cataract is the natural lens inside your eye becoming cloudy with age. It is not a growth and not an emergency. Surgery is worthwhile at the point where the cloudiness limits something you value: driving at night, reading, work or independence.

The operation

Through an opening of about two millimetres the cloudy lens is softened with ultrasound, removed, and replaced with a clear artificial lens. The eye is numbed with drops; you remain awake but comfortable and usually see moving lights and colours rather than any detail. Each eye takes fifteen to twenty minutes and you go home the same day.

Before surgery

- Detailed measurements determine the power of your lens implant. Dry eye is treated first, because an unstable tear film distorts these readings.
- Continue your usual medicines unless told otherwise. Blood thinners are generally continued for this operation.
- Arrange for someone to take you home. You may eat normally unless you are told otherwise.
- Do not wear eye make-up on the day.

After surgery – the first week

- Wear the protective shield at night for the first week. Do not rub or press the eye.
- Use the drops exactly as prescribed and on the reducing schedule given to you.
- Vision is often blurred or watery on the first day and improves over the following days. Colours may look surprisingly bright or blue-tinged; this settles.
- Avoid swimming, dusty environments, gardening and heavy lifting for two weeks.
- Reading, screens, television and gentle walking are all fine straight away.

Glasses afterwards

Your vision continues to settle for several weeks. A final spectacle prescription is issued at around four to six weeks. Depending on the implant chosen, reading glasses may still be needed.

Contact the clinic urgently if you develop

- Increasing pain that is not relieved by simple painkillers
- Vision that gets worse rather than better
- Increasing redness, or discharge from the eye
- New flashing lights, a shower of floaters, or a shadow across your vision

Some months or years later

The thin membrane behind the implant can become cloudy, causing gradual blurring similar to the original cataract. This is common and is cleared painlessly in a couple of minutes with a laser, in the clinic. The cataract itself cannot return.

Reviewed by Dr. Aysun Yucel Gencoglu, MD, FEBO, FICO.

Notes for you from today's consultation