

CATARACTS



A cataract is a clouding of the lens inside the human eye, that is located just behind the pupil of the iris. The lens is normally transparent and clear, but age, sunlight exposure, smoking, and heredity can cause the lens to become yellowed in color and eventually fully cloudy.

Although cataract formation can be evident at birth or can form early in life, it is most

common in seniors. Cataracts are commonly found in both eyes but one eye can have an earlier start than the other. The eyes can then suffer from increasingly cloudy vision at a variety of rates.

Since light enters the eye through the pupil, any degree of cataract can blur vision. At first, the cataract can cause vision prescription changes which can be corrected with new eyeglasses or contact lenses. Advancing clouding can cause blur that is not correctable with a new prescription, and that is when cataract surgery is considered.

If a person experiences poor vision in dim lighting, glare around lights at night, doubling of vision, or an inability to see subtle differences in colors like black and blue, cataracts may be progressing. When cataracts cause enough symptoms to impair daily function, a cataract surgeon will review them and offer surgery if appropriate.

Cataract surgery is very technologically advanced and very safe. However, as with any surgical procedure, there are risk factors associated with cataract surgery so caution must be taken when considering surgery. Today surgeons can perform the entire surgery without sedation and through incisions in the front of the eye that are so small that they can close on their own without stitches.

Implant lenses that are put into the eyes after cataract surgery can restore clear, sharp vision. Depending on the type of implant lens, glasses may be less necessary after surgery than they were before.

Please make time to have a complete eye and vision examination annually.