

Cataract Surgery: *Home Instructions*

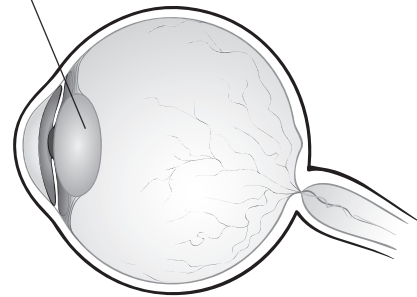
What is cataract surgery?

Cataract surgery is a procedure to replace the natural lens in your eye if it has become cloudy and difficult to see through. Once the lens is removed, it's usually replaced with a clear artificial lens, called an **intraocular lens (IOL)**. The new lens becomes a permanent part of your eye and doesn't wear out or require attention. You won't be able to feel or see it.

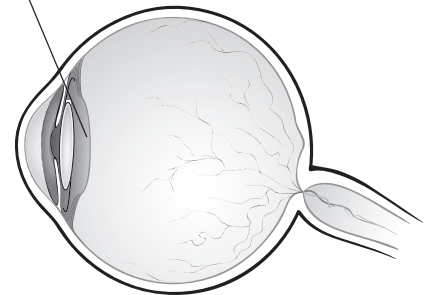
What should I expect after my surgery?

- **Immediately after surgery** you will rest in a recovery room for about 30 minutes to an hour. You may feel sleepy for about 24 hours.
- **Your eye may be itchy, sensitive, or bloodshot** for a few days.
- **You may be given some antibiotic drops** in your eyes to prevent infection.
- **You may be given a patch** to wear over your eye, or dark glasses to wear on the way home.
- **Your doctor will give you a prescription** for eyedrops. You should fill the prescription on the way home.
- **Most patients go home the day of surgery.** You will not be allowed to drive. Someone will need to drive you home.

Before: the natural lens is cloudy and difficult to see through



After: the artificial lens is clear



Before your cataract surgery, you and your ophthalmologist (eye doctor) will decide which is the best type of lens for you.

When will my vision return to normal?

Most patients heal completely within 8 to 10 weeks. If you need surgery on both eyes, your surgeon will decide when your first eye has healed enough for the second surgery. This can be within a few days to a few weeks.

Once you've healed from surgery, you can get a new prescription for glasses. Wearing your old glasses won't hurt your eyes, but you may need a different prescription.

How do I care for myself at home?

Pain

Cataract surgery usually doesn't cause a lot of pain. Ask your doctor what pain medication to use if you need it in the first few days after your surgery.

Protection

It's important to keep germs out of your eye while it's healing.

- **Try not to touch or rub your eye.** If you must touch your eye, be sure to wash your hands first.
- **Wear your eye patch** until your doctor says it's okay to remove it. Most patients wear it for a day.
- **Wear your eye shield at night or while napping** so you don't rub your eye while sleeping. Your doctor will tell you how many nights to do this. For most people it's from 1 to 7 nights.
- **Use the eye drops your doctor prescribes,** just as your doctor advises. They'll help prevent inflammation and infection. These are the steps for using eyedrops:
 - Tilt your head back.
 - Pull down your bottom eyelid.
 - Squeeze one drop inside your eyelid. Be careful not to touch the bottle to your eye.
 - Close your eyes for a few seconds.
 - If you need to add another drop, wait a few minutes.

Activity

You should be able to return to your normal activities very soon after cataract surgery.

- **Relax for the first 24 hours.** Reading a book or watching television won't hurt your eye.
- **Don't drive a car** for 24 to 48 hours.
- **Don't wear eye makeup** for 2 weeks.
- **Don't worry about flying in an airplane** or bending over. These should not hurt your eyes.

Follow-up appointment

Be sure to follow up with your doctor at the recommended time. It's important for your doctor to see that you're healing well, and to provide additional treatment if you need it.

Be sure to ask your doctor how often you should come back for regular eye exams.

When should I contact my doctor?

Cataract surgery is very common and problems are rare. Nevertheless, problems can occur after any surgery. With prompt attention, these problems can usually be treated successfully.

Contact your doctor or ophthalmologist if you experience any of the following:

- **Nausea, vomiting, or fever** over 101°F in the first days after surgery.
- **Pain** that does not get better with the pain medication your doctor recommended.
- **Inflammation or bleeding** in your eye.
- **Sudden worsening of vision.**
- **Sudden flashes of white light or sudden showers of black dots across your field of vision.** These can be signs of retinal detachment, which is rare but serious. It needs to be treated right away.

Ophthalmologist's name:

Phone: