

Cataract

PATIENT INFORMATION



Direct Referral Programme for Cataract Operations

Primary Eye Care (East London & City) Ltd

Email:

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You have a cataract

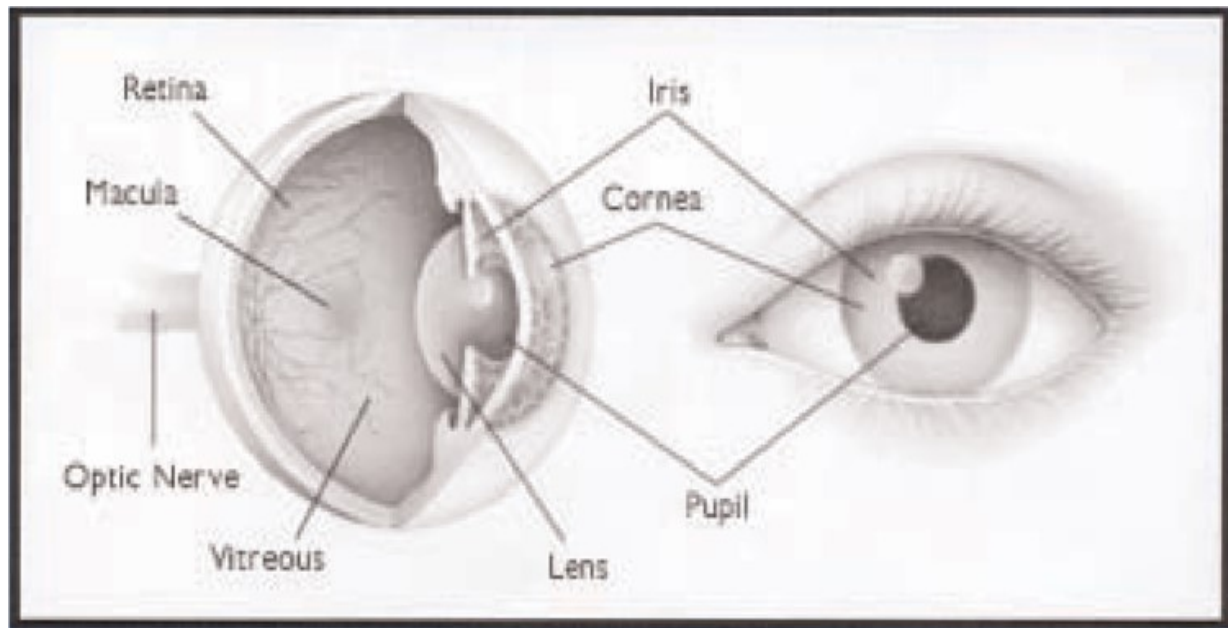
You have been told you have a cataract, which is making it more difficult for you to see clearly.

This may be causing you problems when reading, problems seeing kerbs and steps, you might need more light indoors and colours may appear dulled.

Most cataracts occur as part of the normal ageing process, but there can be other causes. Cataracts can be hereditary and are sometimes seen in children.

What is a cataract?

The human eye, rather like a camera, contains a lens, in order for you to see well, this should be clear to let enough light through to the retina at the back of the eye. Your lens has become cloudy, stopping you from seeing clearly. This is a cataract and it often develops as you get older. In the early stages, a change in your spectacle prescription is all that is needed.



Cataracts can be removed

For most people, cataracts can be removed

Cataracts are not normally harmful, so we only remove them if they are affecting your quality of life and you want to go ahead with the operation. If you feel that you can see well with your spectacles and the cataracts are not causing a problem at the moment, you can continue to visit your optometrist/optician for check-ups. You do not need to go to the hospital until you want cataract surgery.

How is a cataract removed?

Surgery is the only way to treat cataracts. The cloudy lens is removed, and an artificial lens inserted into your eye. Contrary to what you may have heard, lasers are not used.

For most cataracts the surgeon makes a tiny hole in your eye. The lens is softened and broken up with sound waves and cataract is easily removed. A new lens is then implanted. A small stitch may be needed to seal the eye. This way of removing cataract is called phacoemulsification.

Removing a cataract is usually done by local anaesthetic, which means you are awake during the operation. Most patients are treated as day cases. This means you will come in to the hospital, have the cataract removed and then be able to go home the same day.

Before Surgery

Before surgery, you will need to come to hospital for an assessment visit. This will last a few hours. During this visit you will need to have eye drops to enlarge your pupils so we can see into your eye better. The drops may make you sensitive to bright light and may blur vision for a few hours, so you are advised not to drive for several hours after this. You will be given more information about the operation and what to do afterwards at this visit., you will also be given a date for your surgery.

The Result

The majority of patients who undergo cataract surgery have better vision afterwards. Some patients see very well within a few days, while others it may take a few weeks. The implanted lens will be specially selected for your needs.

After having cataract surgery most people need to have their spectacles changed, and may only need them for reading or when they need to see very clearly, e.g. for driving.

Cataract operations result in improved vision in about 95% of cases

With any operation there is a small risk of complication

- Following cataract surgery, about 95% of patients will see an improvement in their vision, if they do not have any other eye problems
- 1 in 300 (0.33) may have serious complications, such as infection or haemorrhage (bleeding), which may cause severe and permanent loss of vision.
- About 5% may have less serious surgical problems, which can often be corrected at the time of surgery or with a further procedure, but might affect the vision.

Further information will be available at your assessment where there will be an opportunity to talk about risk on an individual basis.

