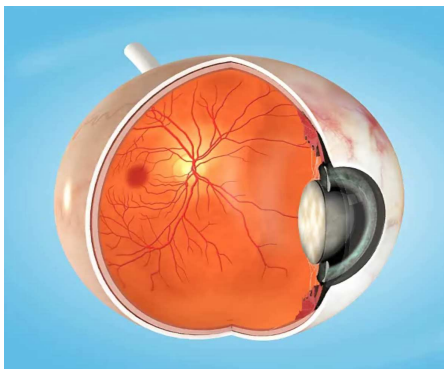


CATARACT TREATMENT

Q What is a cataract?

A If you have been told that you have a cataract, don't be alarmed. Over half of those over 65 have some signs of cataract and most cases can be treated successfully.

A cataract is a clouding of the part of your eye called the lens. The lens sits behind the iris, (the coloured part of the eye) and helps to focus light on the retina at the back of the eye. It is normally clear but as the years go by it is not unusual for it to become slightly hazy.

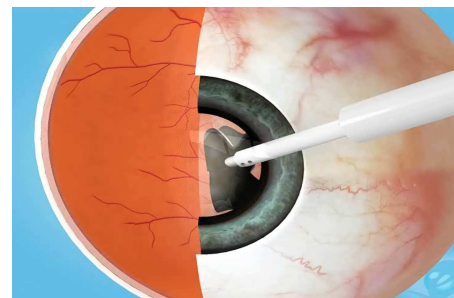


Q What can be done to help?

A The most effective treatment for cataracts is a small operation to remove the cloudy lens and replace it with a clear plastic lens. Surgery is usually considered when your vision is no longer adequate to carry out normal daily activities.

Q How do I get help?

A If you have a cataract, your optometrist or GP will arrange for you to be seen by an eye specialist, to assess your suitability for surgery and to take some preliminary measurements.

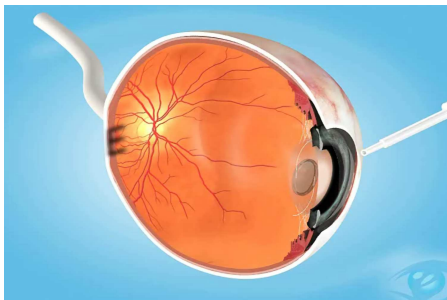


Q What happens in the operation?

A For most people, it is possible to have your operation and go home on the same day, as long as you have someone to look after you at home. Sometimes surgery will mean a short stay in hospital.

Just before the operation you will be given eye drops to enlarge your pupil and something to help you relax if you want this. Normally cataract surgery is

performed with a local anaesthetic and some sedation. The local anaesthetic numbs the area that is being operated on. You will be wide awake but feel nothing in your eye. Usually the eye specialist will explain what is happening as the operation goes along, and a nurse will be there to hold your hand and make sure that you are alright. The operation usually takes 15 to 20 minutes. During the operation your cloudy lens is replaced with a clear plastic lens.



Q What happens after the operation?

A A pad or shield will probably be put over your eye to protect it from accidental rubbing and bumping after the operation.

Most people notice an immediate improvement in their vision after the operation although complete healing may take several months. You will no longer be able to see with your old spectacles and will probably

need new spectacles for reading and possibly for looking into the distance as well.

You will be given some eye drops to use for up to a month after the operation. Try to avoid rubbing your eye and wear an eye shield for the first few nights if you are a restless sleeper. Do not do any heavy lifting, and avoid strenuous exercise and swimming. You can do light housework or cooking, but try to get some help if you can.

You will be reassessed by an eye specialist after a few weeks and at this stage you should have another eye test to determine what spectacles you will require. Avoid driving until your surgeon says that it is safe.