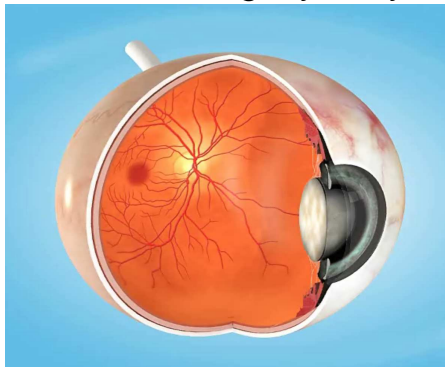


CATARACTS

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 How do cataracts affect your sight?

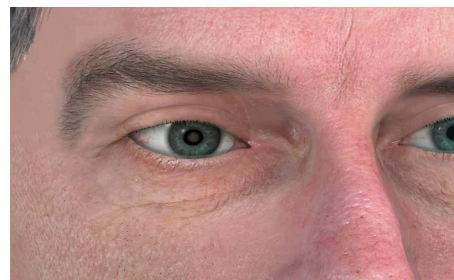
A In the early stages, cataracts tend to make your vision slightly blurred or hazy. You may feel that your glasses seem dirty or

scratched even when they are not.

You may find that your vision is worse under certain conditions such as bright sunlight or looking at car headlamps at night. You might find that colours look slightly washed out or you may experience slight double vision.

Q What causes cataracts?

A Cataracts can form at any age but are more common among older people.



In some cases cataracts are associated with an eye injury, diabetes or various other eye conditions. Although nobody knows the exact cause of cataracts that

occur as you get older, excessive exposure to sunlight, smoking and poor diet all seem to be risk factors.

Q What can be done to help?

A In the early stages vision can often be improved by updating your spectacles. However, as the cataracts develop you may find that your cloudy vision is beginning to interfere with your daily life even when wearing the correct spectacles. At this stage you will need a minor operation to remove the cloudy lens and replace it with a clear plastic lens.

Your optometrist will be able to advise you about this and arrange for you to be assessed at the local hospital if appropriate.

