

HOW LONG DOES THE OPERATION TAKE?

A cataract surgery generally takes approximately 20 minutes.

IS CATARACT SURGERY PERMANENT?

Yes. It is not possible to get another cataract once it has been removed. However, approximately 10% of patients may become aware of a gradual blurring of vision some months, or even years, after the surgery. This is due to thickening of the lens capsule that supports your artificial lens. If this occurs, clear vision is usually restored by a simple laser treatment, called a capsulotomy. This can be performed during a short visit to the clinic.

WILL I NEED GLASSES AFTER THE SURGERY?

Most patients will require glasses for fine visual tasks although some patients can get by without them for certain activities.

WHAT IF I HAVE OTHER EYE DISEASES?

There are many diseases which can affect and limit the eye's visual improvement following cataract surgery. These can usually be diagnosed before the operation and your ophthalmologist will discuss the impact of any such problems with you.

DOES IT HURT?

No. An anaesthetic is applied before surgery so that there is no pain. Your eyelids are held open by a spring, so all you have to do is lie still for the surgery. However some people experience slight discomfort after the surgery.

CAN I HAVE BOTH EYES DONE AT THE SAME TIME?

Yes, although if you have cataracts in both eyes you will probably have two separate surgeries, typically a week or more apart. This decision is made with you and your surgeon.



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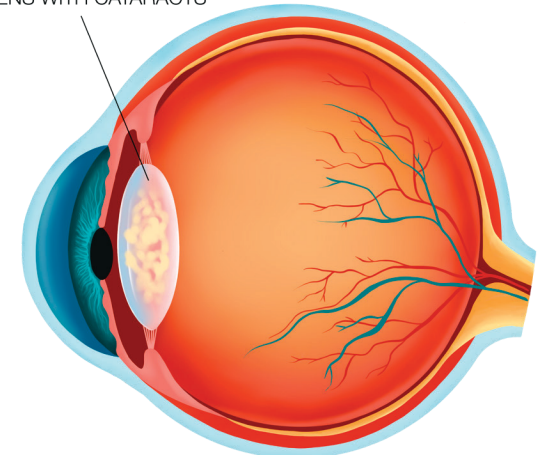
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CATARACT SURGERY

A cataract is a clouding of the lens inside the eye. Cataract surgery involves replacing this lens with an artificial lens.

LENS WITH CATARACTS



WHAT ARE CATARACTS?

A cataract is a clouding of the lens inside the eye, due to a build up and change in the protein in the lens; this restricts light from passing through the eye and reaching the retina. When this occurs, vision is affected. An opacity can be quite minor or it can become so marked that it prevents adequate vision. The vision can become very blurry, requiring rapid changes in your glasses strength. It can also result in increased glare, particularly with driving at night.

Cataracts are not generally visible to the naked eye.

WHAT CAUSES CATARACTS

The most common cause of cataracts is ageing. By the age of 60 around half of all adults have some cataract formation and by the age of 70 nearly everyone does. There is no proven way of preventing cataracts but there are contributing factors:

- Inherited or developmental problems.
- Health problems such as diabetes.
- Medications such as steroids.
- Trauma to the eye.
- UV damage.

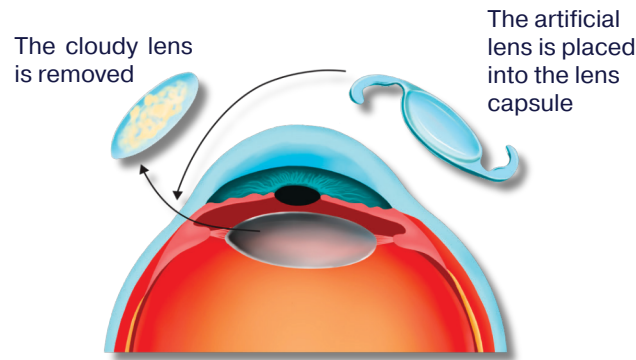
COMMON SYMPTOMS OF CATARACTS:

- Cloudy or blurry vision.
- Light sensitivity; from car headlights that seem too bright at night, glare from lamps, very bright sunlight, or the appearance of a halo around lights. Poor or reduced night vision.
- Monocular double vision (multiple images in one eye). A need for frequent changes of glasses or contact lenses.
- A dulling of colours, especially blue hues or shades. Cataracts can make the vision very blurry and cause a darkening of colours. After cataract surgery you may be surprised to see the world with all of its colours again.

CATARACT OPERATION

LENS REPLACEMENT WITH AN INTRAOCULAR LENS

Cataract surgery involves removing the cloudy lens from inside the eye, through a small incision, and replacing it with a new artificial lens, also called an IntraOcular Lens (IOL).



Cataract removal is one of the most common eye operations performed in New Zealand today. It is also one of the safest and most effective, and is successful in over 98% of cases.

NORMAL VISION



CATARACT VISION



This illustration is a guide only; individual symptoms may vary.

CATARACT TREATMENT

Only cataracts causing symptoms need treatment. During the early stages of a cataract, a change in glasses may improve the clarity of vision, though this is usually temporary. When cataracts begin to interfere with daily activities, surgical removal is the only effective treatment. Modern cataract, or lens replacement surgery, is effective in restoring vision to most patients. This involves removing the cloudy lens from inside the eye through a small incision, and replacing it with a new artificial lens, also called an IntraOcular Lens (IOL), made from acrylic materials. There are many different types of specialised IOL's to deliver visual outcomes tailored to individual patient's needs; bifocal, trifocal, extended depth of focus, monofocal, fixed focus. Your surgeon will discuss your needs and options with you.

COMMON QUESTIONS:

HOW IS A CATARACT DETECTED?

A cataract may be detected by your optometrist or family doctor. It is important that a thorough eye examination is performed by your optometrist or eye specialist to ensure that there are no other causes for your blurry vision.

HOW FAST DOES A CATARACT DEVELOP?

How fast a cataract develops varies among individuals and may even vary between eyes. In younger people, and people with diabetes, cataracts may progress rapidly over a few months. However, most age-related cataracts progress gradually over a period of years.

WHEN SHOULD A PERSON WITH A CATARACT HAVE SURGERY?

Cataract surgery is usually considered when loss of vision begins to interfere with daily activities or affect your quality of life. Based on the specific symptoms, a patient and their optometrist or ophthalmologist should decide together when surgery is appropriate.

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