

Cataract Surgery

Cataract treatment is based on the level of visual impairment they cause. If a cataract minimally affects vision, or not at all, no treatment may be needed. Patients may be advised to monitor for increased visual symptoms and follow a regular check-up schedule.

In some cases, changing the eyeglass prescription may provide temporary vision improvement. In addition, anti-glare coatings on eyeglass lenses can help reduce glare for night driving. Increasing the amount of light used when reading may be beneficial.

When a cataract progresses to the point that it affects a person's ability to do normal everyday tasks, surgery may be needed. Cataract surgery involves removing the lens of the eye and replacing it with an artificial lens. The artificial lens requires no care and can significantly improve vision. Some artificial lenses have the natural focusing ability of a young healthy lens. Once a cataract is removed, it cannot grow back.

Two approaches to cataract surgery are generally used:

- **Small-incision cataract surgery** involves making an incision in the side of the cornea (the clear outer covering of the eye) and inserting a tiny probe into the eye. The probe emits ultrasound waves that soften and break up the lens so it can be suctioned out. This process is called phacoemulsification.
- **Extracapsular surgery** requires a somewhat larger incision in the cornea so that the lens core can be removed in one piece. The natural lens is replaced by a clear plastic lens called an intraocular lens (IOL). When implanting an IOL is not possible because of other eye problems, contact lenses and, in some cases, eyeglasses may be an option for vision correction.

As with any surgery, cataract surgery has risks from infection and bleeding. Cataract surgery also slightly increases the risk of retinal detachment. It is important to discuss the benefits and risks of cataract surgery with your eye care providers. Other eye conditions may increase the need for cataract surgery or prevent a person from being a cataract surgery candidate.

Cataract surgery is one of the safest and most effective types of surgery performed in the United States today. Approximately 90% of cataract surgery patients report better vision following the surgery.

Source:

<https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/eye-and-vision-conditions/cataract?sso=y#:~:text=Cataract%20surgery%20involves%20removing%20the,removed%2C%20it%20cannot%20grow%20back.>