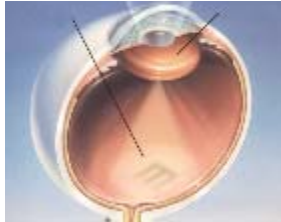


What is a cataract?

A cataract is a clouding of the normally clear lens of the eye. The lens focuses light rays on the retina at the back of the eye to produce a sharp image of what we see. When the lens becomes cloudy, the light rays cannot pass easily through it, and the image becomes blurry.



Cataracts usually develop as part of the aging process, but can also come from:

- Eye Injuries;
- Certain Diseases;
- Medications;
- Genetic Inheritance

Here is an example of how cataracts may look from a patient's point of view as it slowly progresses.



How can a cataract be treated?

The cataract may need no treatment at all if the vision is only a little blurry. A change in your eyeglass prescription may improve vision for a while.

There are no medications, eye drops, exercises or glasses that will cause cataracts to disappear once they have formed. When you are not able to see well enough to do the things you like to do, cataract surgery should be considered. It is not true that cataracts need to be “ripe” before they can be removed.

Surgery is the only way to remove a cataract. Cataracts cannot be removed with a laser, only through a surgical incision. In cataract surgery, the cloudy lens is removed from the eye. In most cases, the focusing power of the natural lens is restored by replacing it with a permanent intraocular lens implant.

What can I expect if I decide to have surgery?

Before Surgery

Your eyes will be measured to determine the proper power of the intraocular lens that will be placed in your eye during surgery. Both of your eyes will be dilated and examined

even if surgery is being considered for only one eye.

It is important that you inform Dr. Ballitch of all medications you are taking. You may be asked to discontinue blood thinners, aspirin or arthritis medications for a few days prior to surgery.

### The Day Of Surgery

Surgery is done as an outpatient at the hospital. You may be asked to skip breakfast, depending on the time of your surgery. Upon arrival for surgery, you will be given a number of eye drops.

An anesthetic will make the operation painless, although you will see light and movement.

The skin around your eye will be thoroughly cleansed, and sterile coverings will be placed around your head. When the operation is over, Dr. Ballitch will often place a shield over your eye.

After a short stay in the outpatient recovery area, you will be ready to go home. You should plan to have someone else drive you home.

### Following Surgery

You will be given an appointment to see Dr. Ballitch the day following surgery.

You will need to:

- Use the eye drops as prescribed;
- Be careful not to rub or press on your eye;
- Use over-the-counter pain medicine if necessary;
- Avoid very strenuous activities until the eyes are healed;
- Continue normal activities and moderate exercise;
- Ask Dr. Ballitch when you can begin driving again;
- Wear eyeglasses during the day and a shield over the eye at night for the first week.
- Dr. Ballitch will give you sunglasses and eye drops by your first post-operative visit.

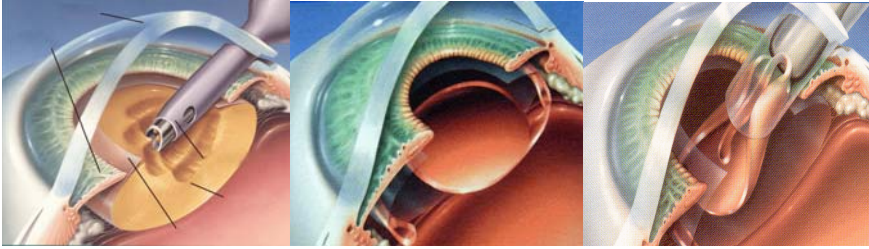
Putting drops in the right way.



### How is Surgery Done?

Under an operating microscope, a small incision is made into the eye. Micro-surgical instruments are used to fragment and suction the cloudy lens from the eye. The back membrane of the lens (called the posterior capsule) is left in place.

A plastic intraocular lens implant will be placed inside the eye to replace the natural lens that was removed. Stitches are seldom needed.



When is the laser used?

The posterior capsule sometimes turns cloudy several months or years after original cataract operation. If this blurs your vision, a clear opening can be made painlessly in the center of the membrane with the laser. Laser surgery is *never* part of the original cataract operation.

Will Cataract surgery improve my vision?

Over 95% of cataract surgeries improve vision, but a small number of patients may have problems.

Complications

The list of possible complications seems relatively long, but it must be remembered that they are the exception. Most patients experience no complications.

Possible complications of cataract surgery include:

- Droopy Eyelid
- Double Vision
- High Eye Pressure
- Low Eye Pressure
- Swelling
- Bleeding in the eye
- Infection
- Retina Detachment
- Cataract Can Fall To Back Of Eye
- Loss of Vision
- Loss Of Eye
- Death ( typically secondary to heart disease )
- Cloudy Posterior Capsule ( treated with a laser )

Call Dr. Ballitch IMMEDIATELY if you have any of the following symptoms after surgery:

- Pain not relieved by non-prescription pain medications;
- Loss of vision;

- Nausea, vomiting, or excessive coughing;
- Injury to the eye

#### Pre-existing conditions

Even if the surgery itself is successful, the eye may still not see as well as you would like. Other problems with the eye, such as macular degeneration(aging of the retina), glaucoma, and diabetic damage may limit vision after surgery. Even with such problems, cataract surgery may still be worthwhile.

If the eye is healthy, the chances are excellent that you will have good vision following removal of your cataract.

Will I need glasses after Cataract Surgery?

Most likely you will need bifocals following cataract surgery.