

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CATARACT SURGERY

You will be asked to sign a consent form before your cataract operation. The information given in this leaflet and the Cataract Surgery booklet is offered as guidance to help you decide whether or not surgery is right for you. It is not possible to discuss every aspect of your surgery in the context of these leaflets. Please read them carefully and feel at liberty to ask your surgeon further questions. Any special risks that may apply to your eye will be discussed with you.

How do I decide whether to have surgery?

Just because you have a cataract, it does not mean it must be removed immediately. Cataract surgery can almost always be put off until you are unhappy with the way you see. Your doctor cannot make your decision for you, but talking with your doctor can help you decide. You are never too old to have cataract surgery. If it will help your vision and make daily activities easier, it is usually a good idea to consider surgery.

If you have an early cataract, the improvement in vision following surgery may not be very noticeable. If the cataract is more advanced and causing more trouble with your vision, the improvement in vision after surgery is usually more apparent.

What will I see and feel?

What you may see or feel during the operation can vary from person to person and shouldn't cause worry or concern. Most people see a bit of light or movement whereas some see nothing at all and others can see some detail. It is usual to feel the surgeon's hands touching around the eye and sometimes to feel a little pressure, like you might feel were you to rub your own eye. You shouldn't feel any sharp pain.

How is the operation performed?

Cataract surgery is a type of microsurgery in which the surgeon uses a microscope to see what he is doing. Surgery replaces the cloudy natural lens (the cataract) with a clear lens implant to allow you to see and focus clearly again. Everything is carried out inside the eye by working through tiny incisions (openings) that are made in the cornea (the round front window of the eye).

The cloudy cataract is the size of a bean and sits just behind the pupil. Eye drops are used before surgery to dilate the pupil so that the cataract is easier to reach.

A special probe delivers sound waves to soften the cataract so that it can be removed more easily. The capsule membrane around the cataract resembles cling film and is left in place to support the new lens implant inside the eye.

The lens implant is then injected through the tiny incision and unfolds once it is inside the eye. The incisions are so small that they usually heal themselves and stitches are rarely needed. The last thing is a small injection of antibiotic before applying a protective eye pad.

BENEFITS & RISKS of CATARACT SURGERY

Possible Complications of Cataract Surgery

Cataract surgery normally proceeds without problems. Whilst every precaution is taken to reduce risks, problems can still sometimes occur, even when surgery has been straightforward. It is important for you to understand that although the risk of developing a problem or complication may be low, it can still happen to you.

Less serious and minor problems are not uncommon after cataract surgery, are usually short lived and can usually be easily dealt with or settle spontaneously. They can cause discomfort, reduced vision, delayed recovery or other difficulty.

Examples of Less Serious Problems Are:

- minor irritation of the eye
- dry eye
- mild inflammation
- allergy, side effects or reaction to medicines used before, during or after surgery
- bleeding or bruising around the eye or eyelids
- floaters
- elevated pressure in the eye
- water-logging of the cornea
- difficulty with focus or glare
- focus and glasses different from what was predicted
- droopy eyelid
- change in the position of the implant lens
- water-logging of the retina (the seeing layer at the back of the eye)
- double vision

Serious problems and complications are rare but may require further surgery or prolonged treatment that is not always successful in restoring vision. Very rarely, serious problems or complications may result in serious or permanent harm to your vision or general health.

Examples of More Serious Problems Are:

- Infection inside the eye (the risk is approximately 1 in 1000)
- Bleeding inside the eye
- Retinal detachment
- Inflammation of the operated eye or of the other eye
- Vision worse, loss of vision or very rarely, blindness
- Loss of the eye
- Major reaction or side effects to medicines used before, during or after surgery.