

Cataract Surgery



Following an assessment by your Ophthalmology Consultant, a decision has been made to bring you into hospital for cataract surgery. This will be performed in a Day Surgery Unit at one of the SSS treatment sites.

What is a Cataract?

(Taken from the NHS choices website)

Cataracts form when the little lens inside your eye becomes cloudy.

When you are young, your lens is usually clear and soft, allowing you to see through it.

The lens becomes gradually cloudier with age and begins to limit vision.

If you have cataracts, it is your decision whether or not to go ahead with cataract surgery.

Cataracts usually get slowly worse over time. If your glasses are accurate, surgery to replace the cloudy lens may be the only way to improve your eyesight further.

There are no medicines or eye drops that improve cataracts or stop them getting worse.

Cataract surgery is normally a straightforward procedure that takes 15 to 20 minutes.

It is almost always carried out as a 'day case' procedure under local anaesthetic (whilst awake and lying down) and you should be able to go home shortly afterwards.

During the operation, the surgeon will make a tiny incision to remove the cloudy lens from its capsule bag and replace it with a clear plastic one.

As an NHS patient, you will usually be offered a monofocal lens, which has a single, fixed point of focus. This means the focus of the eye would be set for either near or distance vision, but not both. This will be discussed with you prior to surgery.

Following surgery most people are likely to need to wear glasses for tasks requiring detailed vision such as reading and possibly driving.

If both eyes need cataract surgery you will have two separate operations. This will allow the first eye time to heal and your vision to settle down before your second eye has surgery.

What Happens Before Surgery?

You will require a further short appointment prior to surgery for a biometry eye measurement scan that is needed to calculate the strength of the lens to be implanted. You can drive as usual following your biometry assessment because no eye drops will be needed for this appointment.

If you have any concerns prior to surgery which might prevent you from attending, please contact Somerset Surgical Services for advice. This includes feeling unwell or any concerns about your eyes (such as redness), in the days leading up to your operation

Pre-admission eye drops

You may receive a small vial of eye drops (Cyclopentolate 1%) in the post, along with an information leaflet telling you what they are, why you have been given them and when you need to

use them. The purpose of asking you to instill the eye drops at home on the day of surgery before coming to the hospital is to streamline the admission process and reduce your waiting time for the procedure once you are admitted as you will be arriving with your pupil already dilated. If you have not received any eye drops please do not worry, they will be administered by a nurse on your arrival at the hospital. Your eye will be assessed by your surgeon on arrival and if your pupil is not sufficiently dilated you will be given more eye drops to assist this.

Please read the information sheet and the leaflet enclosed in the box with the drops carefully before you use them.

If, you are not happy to give yourself these eye drops before you leave home please can you inform the SSS clinical nurse lead on 01934 881379 as soon as you are able to. She will let the theatres staff know that they will need to do it for you when you arrive at hospital.

Next steps

If you think you might be unavailable for any period during the next 2-3 months, please contact your Ophthalmology patient pathway co-ordinator on **01934 881106**

Somerset Surgical Services will contact you in order to arrange a date for your surgery. This could be a morning or an afternoon admission. All morning admissions are at 8am and afternoon admissions at 12 noon.

Please be aware that all patients for a morning or an afternoon list are requested to attend at the same time. This is in order for the Consultant to see all the patients prior to the start of the operating list.

Please be prepared to be at the hospital for the entire morning or afternoon, according to your admission time. You should be able to go home on the same day as your cataract surgery.

Please avoid wearing facial make-up for 3 days before surgery

If anything changes in the appearance of your eye or in your general health between your clinic appointment and your surgery please contact the SSS office for advice.

What Happens After Surgery?

You will need to arrange for someone to bring you and take you home after surgery. Ideally, you should have someone stay with you overnight.

You will need to be able to, or have someone help you, instil eye drops 4 times a day for 4 weeks post operatively. If you are not able to do this please speak to your GP surgery to see if they are able to assist you with the administration of the eye drops. Please be aware that most patients need to make their own arrangements for the instillation of eye drops.

If you have any problems with either of these post operation requirements and they cannot be overcome, please contact Somerset Surgical Services on

01934 881106

Following surgery it is quite common to have:

- grittiness
- watering
- blurred vision
- double vision
- red or bloodshot eye

These usually settle down or improve within a few days but it can take 4 to 6 weeks or very occasionally longer to recover fully.

If you need a change of glasses, it is better to wait 4 weeks or so following your surgery.

Many people feel more confident waiting until after they have had their follow up appointment before having their glasses altered by their optician.

Cataract surgery has a high success rate in improving your eyesight and should allow you to return to your normal activities. However, even if your vision meets the legal standard to drive, following your surgery, you should not do so unless you feel confident about it and can see well.

When to seek help

Contact Somerset Surgical Services or the 111 service (out of hours) as soon as possible if you experience:

- increasing pain and/or redness
- increased stickiness
- decreasing vision

Dos and don'ts

For the first few weeks after surgery:

Do:

- Take the surgeon's advice before planning holidays soon after surgery.
- use your eye drops as instructed
- take it easy for the first 2 to 3 days
- use your eye shield at night for a week
- take painkillers if you need to
- bathe or shower yourself as usual
- avoid swimming for 2 to 3 weeks

Don't:

- rub your eye
- allow soap or shampoo to get into your eye
- drive until you get the all-clear from your doctor or optician
- do any strenuous exercise or housework
- wear eye make-up for at least 2 weeks
- Bend over for any prolonged length of time i.e. gardening.

Using your eye drops after surgery

Before you leave hospital, you'll be given some eye drops to help your eye heal and prevent infection.

It's important to use your eye drops as instructed by your doctor. Unless told otherwise, you should:

- start your drops the morning after the operation
- only use them on the operated eye
- wash your hands before using your drops
- don't stop your eye drops without advice from your doctor
- don't let anyone else use your eye drops

You'll be advised further about the use of eye drops at your follow up appointment, usually 1-6 weeks after your operation.

At this appointment, you may be given advice on when to stop using your eye drops and when to arrange for new glasses.

How to apply eye drops

1. wash your hands
2. tilt your head back
3. look up at the ceiling
4. gently pull down the lower lid
5. squeeze the bottle until a drop goes into the centre of your eye
6. close your eye and wipe away any excess liquid
7. don't let the bottle touch the eye

If you run out of the drops, contact your GP or SSS for more.

How to clean your eye

- boil some water and allow it to cool
- wash your hands
- dip cotton wool or clean gauze in the cool boiled water
- gently wipe from the inside (near your nose) to the outside corner of your eye
- don't wipe inside your eye
- don't wash your eye out with water
- don't press on your eye

During the first 2 weeks, you may need to clean your eye twice a day because the drops and the healing process can cause slight stickiness.

If you have difficulty administering eye drops there are devices available which can help you. These can be bought from many chemists or online and are usually categorised as 'eye drop dispensers'.

There is a separate information sheet available to you entitled '**Important information about your cataract surgery**'. This sheet goes into further detail about the risks of cataract surgery and contains information that you should be aware of before your admission.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet and for choosing Somerset Surgical Services and Weston General Hospital as your care provider. Our aim is to make your stay as pleasant and comfortable as possible. Please do remember that if you have any questions then just ask.

Help us prevent the spread of infection in hospital.

Please make sure your hands are clean.
Wash and dry them thoroughly and/or use
the gel provided.

**If you have been unwell in the last 48
hours please consider whether your
visit is essential.**



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