

Common questions about Cataract removal you may be asking...

When is the Best time to treat Cataracts?

Many people believe cataracts have to be “ripe” before they can be removed. This is not true anymore. Cataract surgery is a routine procedure that can be performed as soon as the cataract interferes with your quality of life.

How long will the surgery take? Will I feel anything?

Cataract removal is typically performed in an outpatient surgery center. You will arrive at the center about an hour before the surgery. The actual treatment time is about 20 minutes. Eye drops will be placed in your eye and medication may be administered intravenously to help you relax. The eye drops numb your eye so you don't feel any discomfort. You will remain in the outpatient center for about thirty minutes after your procedure.

How long is the healing period? When will I be able to return to my normal activities?

You should be able to return to most normal activities within several days. Plan on returning to work within 2-5 days if your vision is stable and you are comfortable. If your doctor is correcting astigmatism the vision will be slightly blurry for the first week after surgery. Driving may be limited for the first several days. Your eye may be sensitive to the touch for a few days and you should avoid rubbing your eye. It is also important to avoid heavy lifting or straining. You will also need to wear a protective eye shield while you sleep for one week. You can shower, but you should avoid getting soapy water in your eyes. Refrain from eye makeup until your physician gives you the OK. You should also avoid swimming pools and hot tubs for several weeks. Light exercise can be resumed one week after surgery. Remember, this is surgery, and there is a healing period. You must have patience. You will be adapting and learning to use your new vision over the next several months.

Should I have my cataract surgery performed with a laser?

The advent of laser cataract surgery has brought a new level of accuracy and precision to the procedure allowing patients to achieve more consistent and predictable outcomes. A digital imaging system helps the computer controlled laser make incisions, correct astigmatism, and soften the cataract with unprecedented accuracy. With laser surgery, we customize the procedure to your eye's unique characteristics, resulting in improved visual outcomes.

After surgery, will I need glasses?

If you choose the traditional lens implant, you will need glasses for distance and near tasks. If you choose the multifocal implant, you will have the best chance of eliminating or reducing your need for distance and reading glasses. There is a small chance that you will need glasses for some tasks through the healing or adaptation period which passes quickly. After a short time, you will depend less and less on glasses and may use them less than 5-10% of the time. The Toric, or astigmatism correcting implant, will decrease the need for distance glasses but reading glasses will still be needed.

Why can't the basic, old style, lens implant let me see up close?

The basic, old style lenses do not have the unique design that provides near vision. They are designed to provide one point of focus. The point of focus generally selected by most people is

for distance vision. Reading glasses will be needed to see everything within arms-length. If you have used mono-vision with contact lenses in the past, some patients are good candidates to duplicate this type of vision with lens implants. If you have been a successful mono-vision user in the past, discuss this option with your doctor.

What if I have astigmatism? Does the surgery or the lens correct that?

Astigmatism is a condition that requires treatment to achieve the best vision. Your physician will decide if it is best to correct any significant astigmatism during the surgery. This will make your healing time a little longer than normal, but you will enjoy the result. The Toric lens may be offered to you if your astigmatism is significant. Astigmatism correction by any method, manual, the toric intraocular lens, or LASER assisted astigmatism correction is not covered by Medicare or insurance companies.

How do I know if I am a good candidate for a multifocal lens?

Your doctor will perform a thorough exam and advise you of the lens option that may best fit your lifestyle. Virtually everyone in good general and ocular health is a candidate. People with chronic infections, uncontrolled diabetes, macular degeneration, or other ocular or health problems may have to wait until these conditions are under control prior to surgery and may not be candidates for the multifocal lens implant.

Should I have a multifocal lens in both eyes?

Yes, definitely. Studies on multifocal lenses report the best results in patients who have had these implants in both eyes. It is very important for your eyes to be able to work together, and that is a difficult task if only one eye has the new lens. There may be instances where your physician would not want to do this, but it will be only in special cases.

What about dry eyes?

Cataract surgery may temporarily cause an increase in dry eye symptoms. Your physician may choose to administer dry eye therapy to ensure comfort and good vision during the healing period.

Will I have any unusual visual phenomena after surgery?

Glare, halos, and shadows in the periphery may occur in some patients after surgery. In the early healing phase, you may experience some of these symptoms. This is normal and diminishes gradually with healing.

Will my insurance/Medicare cover any of the procedure?

We expect that Medicare or your health insurance plan will pay for basic cataract surgery, less any deductibles, co-insurance, and co-payment requirements. We know that they will not cover the costs of refractions, the toric astigmatism correcting lens, manual or laser astigmatism treatments, the multifocal lens, or the preoperative testing required to implant these lenses. Laser refractive surgery to fine tune the refractive results is also not covered. Medicare and most insurance companies classify these new technology lenses and procedures as elective and are therefore not covered.

When will I need to have my eyes checked after surgery?

Your doctor will advise you based on your procedure. Typically, the doctor will see you the day after surgery, at 2 weeks, and again around 3 months after surgery. Thereafter, an annual exam is typical.

Will I ever have to have cataract surgery again?

Once you have cataract surgery with any implanted lens, you will never need to have cataract surgery again. Occasionally, several months after the surgery, your vision may start to become slightly cloudy again. This can happen with any type of cataract surgery and with any type of lens implant, even the multifocal lens. This is sometimes called a secondary cataract. This is just a normal clouding of the membrane that supports the lens. This clouding is easily treated with a common, in office, laser polishing procedure called a YAG laser capsulotomy. The YAG laser is painless and the covered procedure takes minutes and only needs to be done once per eye.

What are the chances that something could go wrong with the surgery?

The state-of-the-art treatment for cataracts is to remove the crystalline lens and replace it with an artificial lens. The medical procedure to remove a cataract and implant an artificial lens is 98% successful. Sophisticated image guided lasers are now used to perform many of the steps of the cataract procedure that were previously done manually. The laser provides an increased level of precision that helps patients obtain better quality vision. Over 40 million procedures have been done to date. But because it is surgery, it is not completely risk-free.

Complications of cataract surgery range from minor, usually temporary side effects, to sight-threatening complications. Fortunately, significant sight-threatening complications are extremely rare, and include, but are not limited to infection, swelling of the retina, hemorrhage, and retinal detachment. People with existing medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, chronic inflammatory conditions and chronic infections are at a higher risk of developing problems. Current data indicate that 98% of people have no complications after cataract surgery and more than 95% have significantly improved vision. Your doctor will perform a thorough examination and inform you of any increased risk.

Can I go to any eye doctor for check-ups after the surgery?

Your surgeon will want to see you right after the surgery to ensure your eyes are healing properly. After the initial healing period of two weeks, your surgeon may allow you to see another qualified doctor to perform your follow-up visits.

When can I travel?

We like you to remain in the area for at least 7-10 days following your surgery. After this period it is safe to travel by any mode of transportation including air travel. Remember, your follow-up visits are important. Please discuss any travel plans with our surgical coordinator so we can work around your schedule and not take any chances on compromising your care.

What if I have more questions?

Many questions can be answered by visiting our website at www.bestvision.com. Click on "Cataract". Don't be afraid to call us with any additional questions. Our staff is very knowledgeable.