

ABOUT CATARACTS

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Inside the eye, the lens is located behind the colored iris and is usually difficult to see through the pupil because it is a clear structure. During a comprehensive eye exam, drops are used to dilate the pupil to look for cloudiness or opacities in the lens. When there is cloudiness in the natural lens, this is referred to as a cataract.

The lens is a very specialized structure that is composed of cells that produce lens fibers. If the lens does not form correctly during development, a child can be born with a congenital cataract. The lens actually continues to slowly

grow over time, and can be affected by systemic factors such as diabetes or medications such as steroids. Significant trauma to the eye in the form of injury or exposure to radiation can also be contributory. Age, however, is still the most common factor leading to cataract formation.

computer. When a cataract has become significantly cloudy, has affected vision that can be measured on an eyechart, and significantly interferes with a patient's activities of daily living, a cataract surgery can be performed. A cataract surgery is an outpatient surgical procedure where the cloudy lens is removed and replaced with a clear synthetic lens implant called an intraocular lens (IOL). This surgery is most commonly performed using a high frequency ultrasound called phacoemulsification to break up the cataract and remove it from the eye



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It is possible to have a mild cataract and not have any symptoms of impaired vision. Over time, a cataract can become cloudy enough to cause problems with a person's vision. Patients with cataracts may complain of difficulty reading, driving, watching television or using a

through a small incision. Thanks to current techniques, most patients enjoy a rapid recovery of their vision, seeing improvement in their vision within days of their surgery, or even the next day.

With a cataract surgery, there is the opportunity to select a lens implant to reduce a patient's dependence on glasses. In most cases, a fixed focus or monofocal lens implant is selected for distance vision and glasses are used for near. There are lens implants available that can give both distance and near vision, but their success depends on an individual patient's eye and visual needs.