

Cataract

Overview – Cataract

A normal part of aging, cataracts are a common problem in people 65 and older, but they can occur at any age. Cataract surgery is the most frequently performed and most successful surgical procedure in the United States. We perform hundreds of outpatient cataract surgeries each year at our very own Ambulatory Surgical Center and provide complimentary transportation to and from your surgery.

Cataracts occur when the normally clear lens of the eye becomes cloudy. Cataract formation may be hastened by trauma to the eyes, certain systemic diseases (diabetes, for example), medications (such as corticosteroids), smoking, and poor nutrition.

Our physicians have access to the latest scientific findings and treatments for cataracts, including:

- Age-related cataracts, which make up 90 percent of cases
- Congenital cataracts, when babies are born with the condition
- Complicated cataracts, which develop in people with other health problems such as diabetes or who take corticosteroids
- Secondary cataracts, which develop in up to 50 percent of cases following previous cataract surgery
- Traumatic cataracts, such as those developing from an eye injury.

Symptoms

Cataracts tend to develop slowly, with gradual worsening of vision. Symptoms include:

- Cloudy or blurry vision
- Colors that seem faded
- Difficulty driving at night because headlights seem too bright
- Double or multiple vision
- Problems with glare from lamps or the sun
- Frequent prescription changes in your eyeglasses or contact lenses.

Other eye diseases besides cataracts may cause these symptoms. See your ophthalmologist or eye care professional if you have any of these conditions. A regular eye exam is all that is needed to find a cataract.

Cataract surgery may be beneficial when you:

- Need to drive, but there is too much glare from the sun or headlights
- Cannot see well enough to perform tasks at work
- Cannot see well enough to do the tasks you need to do at home, such as cook, clean, or repair
- Cannot see well enough to do the things you like to do, such as read, watch television or movies, sew, or play games or sports
- Are afraid of bumping into objects or falling
- Are not as independent as you would like because of poor vision
- Are not improved sufficiently by glasses.

The result of cataract surgery is usually the same whether a person waits for months or years before having the surgery. You have time to carefully consider your options before deciding to proceed.

Slowing Cataract Formation

Although there is no way to prevent cataracts, research has shown that there are steps you can take to slow down the onset of the disease:

- Schedule regular eye exams.
- Protect your eyes from the sun and trauma: wear sunglasses or a hat to shield your eyes from the sun and its ultraviolet light. Wear protective eyewear when working with dangerous machinery or chemicals or playing sports.
- Stop smoking.
- Eat for health: Certain vitamins and minerals found in a balanced diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and fish may help the eyes age more slowly.
- Know your risk: Chronic health conditions like diabetes and thyroid disease may raise your chances of developing cataracts. Be sure your doctor knows about these other health disorders.