

GENERAL INFORMATION

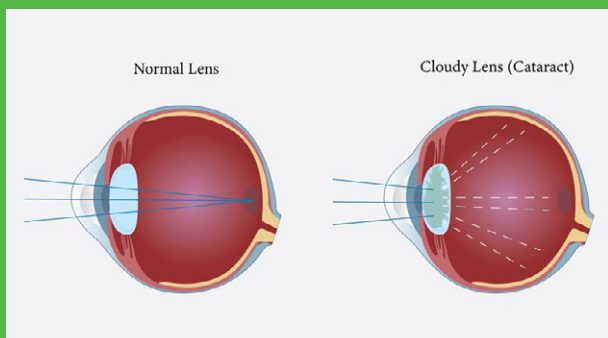
CATARACT & LENS SURGERY



vision
eye institute

WHAT IS A CATARACT?

A cataract is not a growth, but rather a clouding of the normally transparent and flexible lens of the eye. This condition usually develops over some time and interferes with light entering the eye, which affects a person's ability to see clearly. If left untreated, people with cataracts may eventually go blind. Both eyes may be affected, although not usually to the same extent.



What causes a cataract?

Cataracts are caused by the proteins in the eye's lens breaking down and clumping together. This is part of the ageing process, so it's normal for older people to develop cataracts.

Factors that increase the chance of developing cataracts include:

- Age (60+)
- Eye trauma
- Prolonged use of steroids
- Sun exposure
- Previous inflammation and infection in the eye
- Diabetes.



What are the symptoms of cataracts?

Cataracts are not painful and often don't cause noticeable changes in the early stages.

As the condition progresses, symptoms can include:

- Blurred, cloudy or dim vision
- Difficulty seeing at night or in low-light situations
- Being sensitive to bright lights and glare
- Seeing halos
- Needing stronger glasses and more frequently
- Colours appearing faded or yellow
- Double vision in the affected eye
- A whiteness through the pupil (late stage).

CAN CATARACTS BE TREATED?

Cataracts can be surgically treated by replacing the dysfunctional lens with an artificial one. These are known as a replacement lens or intraocular lens (IOL).

Early-stage symptoms can often be managed with a change in your glasses or contact lens prescription. Cataract surgery becomes necessary as vision becomes more impaired.

However, you do not have to wait until then to have cataracts removed. For some people, subtle vision changes such as loss of contrast sensitivity may affect your quality of life (e.g. participation in hobbies that involve fine detail such as sewing and knitting).

After cataract surgery, it is not possible to develop another cataract in that eye.

WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR HAVING CATARACT SURGERY?

Your first appointment

Your initial consultation with one of our specialist cataract surgeons will take 1 to 2 hours and involves:

- A thorough eye exam to assess your suitability for surgery
- A discussion about which replacement lens best suits your needs, as well as the benefits and risks of surgery
- Scheduling your surgery. Cataracts are generally not removed at the same time – the operations are performed anywhere from 1 day to 2 weeks apart
- Providing detailed costs for the procedure, including any out-of-pocket costs not covered by Medicare and private health insurance.

It is strongly advised that you bring a referral from your GP or optometrist to:

- Inform your Vision Eye Institute surgeon of your visual symptoms
- Enable you to claim part of your fees as a rebate from Medicare and/or private health insurance (depending on your level of cover).





The surgery

At Vision Eye Institute, your procedure will be performed in one of our fully equipped, accredited, state-of-the-art day surgeries. You'll be in the day surgery for around 3 hours in total (including admission, preparation and recovery time). The operation itself takes less than 30 minutes.

The surgery involves:

1. Administering either a topical or local anaesthetic to the eye(s). A mild or twilight sedation may be administered to relax you or reduce anxiety if necessary.
2. Making a tiny 2–3 mm incision in the outermost layer of the eye (the cornea).
3. Making an incision in the 'bag' (capsule) containing the affected lens (cataract).
4. Breaking up the affected lens into smaller pieces with an ultrasound or laser (FLACS).
5. Removing these pieces with a vacuum and polishing the lens capsule to clean it.
6. Inserting and accurately positioning the replacement lens. The new lens can't be felt once placed inside the eye.

After surgery

Following cataract surgery, you will be:

- Discharged to your carer and asked to rest for the remainder of the day
- Scheduled for a follow-up appointment
- Given medicated eye drops to use
- Advised to avoid strenuous activities and water in your eyes for the first few days.

Laser-assisted cataract surgery is an alternative technique that uses a femtosecond laser to help with parts of the procedure. It is also known as FLACS, which stands for femtosecond laser-assisted cataract surgery.

COMPREHENSIVE EYE CARE



Scan the QR code to learn more about this service on our website

Vision Eye Institute is the largest private provider of ophthalmic services in Australia. Our team of highly regarded doctors includes general ophthalmologists as well as those who specialise in specific areas/conditions of the eye.

LASER EYE
SURGERY



CATARACT &
LENS SURGERY



GLAUCOMA



DIABETIC EYE
DISEASE



MACULAR
DEGENERATION



RETINAL
CONDITIONS



KERATOCONUS



DRY EYE



PTERYGIUM



CORNEAL
TRANSPLANTATION



CORNEAL
CONDITIONS



NERVE-RELATED
VISION PROBLEMS



RECONSTRUCTIVE
EYE SURGERY



CHILDREN'S
EYE HEALTH



GENERAL
EYE HEALTH



OUR CATARACT CLINICS

For more information or to find a Vision Eye Institute clinic that offers cataract surgery, visit:

visioneyeinstitute.com.au/services/cataract-surgery

This information is general in nature. All medical and surgical procedures have potential benefits and risks. Consult your ophthalmologist for specific medical advice.



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