

## General Questions About Cataract Surgery

Cataract surgery can be frightening if you don't know what to expect. The best thing you can do before your procedure is to arm yourself with information. Here are some general answers about cataract surgery.

### **Is cataract surgery major surgery?**

It is surgery, but it's not considered "major" by the medical community. In most instances, cataract surgery is an outpatient procedure.

### **How long does cataract surgery take?**

The total process, from the time a patient enters the surgery center to when he or she leaves, is about three hours. The procedure itself typically takes less than 20 minutes.

### **Does cataract surgery hurt?**

Generally, no, cataract surgery does not hurt. In addition to medication to relax you before your surgery, the anesthetist will numb your eye with anesthetic eye medication prior to the procedure.

### **What happens if you blink during a cataract operation?**

An eye holder gently keeps the lid open during the procedure to prevent blinking. Although this may sound alarming, usually there is little to no sensation from the lid holder since the eye has been numbed prior to its use. The eye not receiving surgery can remain open or closed during the surgery and will not affect the eye undergoing surgery.

### **What are the side effects of cataract operation?**

The most common side effect is clearer vision. Since cataracts block light, when they are removed the eye will detect more light and could feel more sensitive. There may be reduced pressure in the eye, as well. You may notice more floaters and there could be a dark crescent shape in the peripheral view, but the crescent shape usually goes away on its own in a few months.

### **Does cataract surgery last a lifetime?**

The lens that the surgeon implants during cataract surgery is durable and will last a lifetime, according to [Mayo Clinic](#). Sometimes the capsule that holds the lens can become cloudy, and the [National Eye Institute](#) calls it an "after-cataract." If you have an after-cataract, a laser is used to correct the cloudiness in the office.

### **Can cataracts grow back?**

Cataracts cannot grow back after the natural lens has been removed and replaced with an artificial lens.

# Your Vision After Cataract Surgery

When dealing with an ailment of the eyes, often the greatest concern is if your vision will be affected. Cataract surgery is designed to improve your vision, however, since it is surgery there will be some impact on your vision immediately following the procedure.

## **What will my vision be like after cataract surgery?**

That depends on several factors: the size of the cataract, your overall medical health, the health of the eye, and the type of anesthesia used in the procedure. Most individuals see better within 24 hours and sight will get progressively better within a week following surgery.

## **How long does it take for blurriness to go away after cataract surgery?**

According to the [American Association of Ophthalmology](#), blurring after cataract surgery is usually caused by swelling or edema of the cornea. If this is the case, it will resolve over time. In most cases, patients can see better within a week after surgery. You should talk to your eye doctor if your blurring persists.

## **Can cataract surgery eliminate the need for glasses?**

After cataract surgery, most people will need glasses. Since surgery can change vision, your doctor will wait until your eyes are completely healed before writing a new prescription, which can take up to eight weeks following surgery.

When speaking to your doctor about cataract surgery, you may consider premium lenses that can solve vision problems like presbyopia or astigmatism and dramatically reduce the need for glasses.

## **Do I need to wear dark glasses after cataract surgery?**

No, you don't have to wear sunglasses after cataract surgery. However, many find that they are more light-sensitive since more light is entering the eye post-surgery. Therefore, the decision to wear sunglasses after the procedure depends on your light sensitivity. Almost all modern implants have some UV protection built into the lens itself, but wearing regular protective sunglasses is still recommended.

## **What to Expect Post-Surgery**

After your cataract surgery, you will need to spend a little time recovering. Recovery from cataract surgery is generally easy.

### **Can I drive after cataract surgery?**

Surgery requires an anesthetic, so you will have to arrange for a ride home following the procedure. You may be able to drive as soon as 24-hours after surgery.

### **When can I resume exercise after cataract surgery?**

Your doctor may have you refrain from vigorous exercise for the first week or two after surgery. Restrict lifting or deep bending for several days after surgery as these activities can increase eye pressure. Generally, you should refrain from lifting over 20 pounds, swimming, sitting in a spa, running, and jogging for the first week.

### **How long does it take to recover from cataract surgery?**

It depends upon several factors, including the size of the cataract and the health of the individual. Your eye may feel itchy or sore immediately after the surgery. After a couple of days, most discomfort should disappear. Complete healing may take 4-6 weeks.

### **How long does it take for your vision to clear after cataract surgery?**

Most individuals see better within 24 hours of surgery and sight will become progressively better within the first week.

### **How should you sleep after cataract surgery?**

Wearing a protective shield while you sleep for the first three days is recommended.

### **How do you wash your hair after cataract surgery?**

Do not wash your hair until the day after surgery and avoid getting water, soap, and other non-sterile matter into your eye for several days. However, you may shower and wash your hair as soon as the day after your surgery. Just be sure to keep your eyes closed during hair and face washing to avoid getting product in the treated eye.

### **Can you travel after cataract surgery?**

Most patients can travel within one day after surgery, however, it's recommended that post-surgical follow-up appointments are completed with the surgeon before leaving the area.

### **Can you wear makeup after cataract surgery?**

Do not wear makeup around your eyes for at least a week and consider throwing out any partially used makeup to avoid infection.

## How to Pay for Cataract Surgery

If you've decided to treat your cataracts with surgery, the next question is how you will pay for it. The best option would be for insurance, be it private or Medicare, to pay for the procedure. Beyond insurance, doctors may work with you to establish payment plans for your portion of the expense.

### **Does insurance pay for cataract surgery?**

Yes, but check with your insurance company to get a full understanding of any additional costs that may not be covered. The cost of surgery includes fees for the surgical suite, doctor, anesthesiologist, pre-surgery tests, post-surgery drugs, and follow-up visits with your doctor. You should be able to receive cost estimates to submit to your insurance company to find out how much they'll pay and your portion of the expense. Premium lenses are often not covered by insurance.

### **Does Medicare pay for cataract surgery?**

If you are Medicare-eligible, it will pay for most of the cost of cataract surgery. Supplemental insurance usually covers 80% of the portion that Medicare doesn't cover, which means the unpaid costs will be covered by you.