

CATARACT

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

WHAT IS A CATARACT?

Cataracts are clouding of the lens that can make vision blurred or misty. They are very common.

Cataracts can develop in one or both eyes, and one eye can often be more affected than the other.

The lens is the transparent structure positioned at the front of the eye. It is normally clear and allows light to pass through to the back of the eye. However, if the lens becomes cloudy (opaque), light is unable to pass through the cloudy lens.

As less light is able to pass through the lens, the person's vision is likely to become blurry or cloudy. The cloudier the lens becomes, the more the person's sight will be affected.

It is like looking through dirty net curtains.

WHEN TO SEE YOUR OPTICIAN?

If you have problems with your vision, make an appointment to see your optician (also known as an optometrist). An optician can examine your eyes and test your sight.

The risk of total loss of vision is about 1 to 3 in 1000.

WHERE TO GET ADVICE

If you have any concerns during the post-op period you can get advice or help from one these sources.

- Try your own doctor or nurse at your surgery
- Contact one of the surgical team at Probus tel: 01726 885104
- Out of Hours Service – contact the emergency number provided by your surgery
- Emergency Department of your local hospital

TRAINING OF STUDENTS

We are a teaching and training practice. Sometimes medical students or doctors in training may wish to observe or participate in procedures or operations. They will always be supervised by a senior doctor and will only participate with your approval.

If you do not wish to be seen by trainees or students you are perfectly entitled to withhold your consent.

If, after reading this information leaflet you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the surgical team. Tel: 01726 885104

BENEFITS, COMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

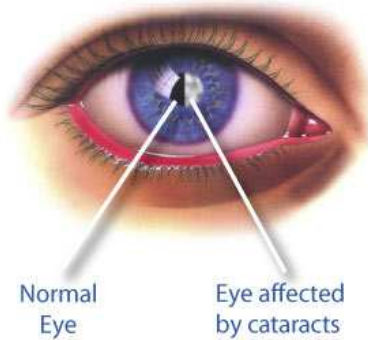
The benefit is to improve your clarity of vision and colour vision. As with all surgical procedures, there is a small element of risk associated with your operation. Some of these can be serious. The success of the operation also depends on whether you have any pre-existing eye conditions. The potential complications during the operation are:

- Severe bleeding inside the eye during operation, which may cause loss of vision
- A tear in the capsule with disturbance of the gel inside the eye that sometimes leads to reduced vision
- Loss of all or part of the cataract into the back of the eye, which requires another operation often requiring a general anaesthetic
- Allergic reaction to local anaesthetics.

The potential complications after the operation are:

- Bruising of the eye or eyelids
- High pressure inside the eye
- Clouding of the cornea
- Swelling of the retina (macular oedema)
- Detached retina that can lead to loss of vision
- Infection (endophthalmitis)- which can lead to loss of sight or, on very rare occasions, loss of the eye

It's advisable for you to have your eyes tested every two years as cataracts are sometimes diagnosed during a regular eye test, even if you have had no symptoms. If your optician feels you need a cataract operation, he/she will inform your GP.



HOW TO BE REFERRED?

Once referred by your GP, you will be asked to choose where you would like to be treated. Choose Probus Surgical Centre.

PROBUS SURGICAL CENTRE

Probus Surgical Centre is easy to get to and has ample free parking. You will have a warm friendly greeting and a service of the highest quality.

ALTERNATIVES TO OPERATION

Glasses may improve your vision to some extent; if the cataract is advanced, glasses will not help and surgery is the only option. If you decide not to have the operation your vision will get worse gradually but not straightaway.

ASSESSMENT

We provide a modern service convenient to your needs. Your consultation, assessment and **your cataract operation can take place on the same day.**

Following a comprehensive examination, incorporating computer technology, Mr Kumar and his team can advise you if you would benefit from a cataract operation. If you are happy, you can choose to have your operation there and then.

Alternatively you could arrange another day – **it's your choice.** Before your operation we give you dilating and anaesthetic eye drops. You may need to have both eyes treated and if so you will be given a future date for that.

TREATMENT/OPERATION

It involves removing the cloudy lens through a very small key hole incision in front of the eye and replacing it with an artificial lens implant. The operation is most commonly performed under local anaesthetic, usually by either drops or occasionally an injection is required. You will not be able to see what is happening. Sometimes local anaesthetic may not be suitable, in which case you will be referred for a general anaesthetic. Usually no stitches are needed.

POST-OP CARE

You will be taken to our recovery room, where you can relax and enjoy a cup of tea with some biscuits. The nurse will go through some post-operative advice and give you an information sheet together with some eye drops. You can leave when you feel ready. One of our nurses will phone you 24 – 48 hours following your operation. We will send you an appointment for a follow up in 2-4 weeks.

In the first 24 hours following surgery it is common to have some redness and swelling of the eyelids. The eye may also feel scratchy or gritty. Blurred vision is normal on the first day due to your pupils being dilated, which should improve over several hours. You can resume your normal activities like reading straightaway.

Glasses will still be required afterwards, especially for reading. You can see your optician 6 weeks after your operation. Driving depends on your individual vision, you need to be able to see a number plate 21 meters away. Please ask the nurse for further information.

Please avoid heavy lifting, make up, flying and getting soap and water in the eye for 2 weeks. No swimming for 6 weeks please.