

## What is a Cataract ?

A cataract is a clouding of the crystalline lens inside of the eye. Normally, this lens is clear. Light travels through the crystalline lens of the eye to form an image on the retina, in much the same way that the lens of a camera focuses light into an image. As this crystalline lens of the eye becomes cloudy, or opaque, light is blocked by the cloudiness and cannot focus into a clear image inside of the eye.

Often, a cataract is mistaken to be a film that grows over the eye. This misconception resulted because the vision loss is many times described in this way. However, a cataract is not a film on the outside of the eye.

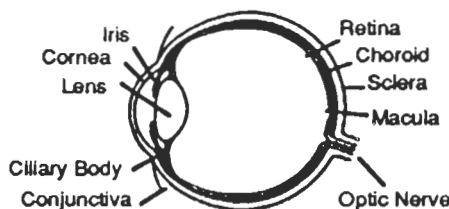
## What causes a Cataract?

Age is the most common reason for cataracts to occur. Individual cells that form the lens, lose their clarity, and become cloudy with age. As these cloudy cells increase in number, they form a large opacity, which we call a cataract.

Other types of cataracts can be caused by injuries to the eye, exposure to infrared and ultraviolet radiation, certain medications such as steroids, and some diseases such as diabetes.

## What are the symptoms of a Cataract ?

Normal symptoms of a cataract include: blurry or foggy vision, sensitivity to glare and bright lights, difficulty with night driving, and a dimming of colors. There is no pain or discomfort associated with cataracts.



**The Human Eye**

## **Facts about CATARACTS**

- Roughly 75% of all people over the age of 60 have some form of a cataract.*
- Over 1 million cataract surgeries are performed successfully each year in the U.S.A.*
- Over 95% of patients see 20/40 or better after cataract surgery.*
- Most cataract surgery is performed on an out patient basis.*
- Due to advances in medical techniques, cataract surgery is one of the simplest, and most effective of all types of surgery performed today.*

## How is a Cataract treated ?

In the early stages of a cataract, slight adjustments in your glasses prescription may be all that is necessary to help you see better. However, as the condition progresses and your vision becomes increasingly blurred, changing your glasses prescription will no longer provide you with better vision. At this point, the only way to see clearly again is with surgical removal of the cataract.

## When is Cataract surgery necessary ?

Surgery should only be considered when your vision is poor enough to limit you during normal daily activities, and when changes in your glasses prescription will not improve your vision. For instance, when you can not pass your driver's license examination, or when you can no longer read the newspaper, cataract surgery will be advised.

## What happens during Cataract surgery ?

Your surgeon will give you more specific information about what to expect during surgery. However, normally the surgeon will remove the crystalline lens and insert an intraocular lens implant. This is a sterile, artificial plastic lens, that is made specifically for your eye. The surgery itself usually takes less than one hour, and is performed on an out-patient basis.