

## Life After Cataracts: Facts, Stats, and FAQs



### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### How will I feel after cataract surgery?

Immediately after surgery, you might feel a little groggy due to the local anesthesia.

#### Can I drive myself home after cataract surgery?

No. You will need to make arrangements to have someone drive you home. If this is not possible, ask your doctor to help you make arrangements.

#### What will happen immediately following the surgery?

Your doctor may place a protective patch over your eye and/of give you dark glasses then take you into the outpatient recovery area. After a brief period of observation, your doctor or someone on your doctor's staff will discuss how to care for your eye at home and provide you with medication prescriptions, if they haven't already. Your follow up visit will be scheduled, usually for within 24 hours, and then you will be allowed to go home, but someone else must drive you.

#### What will I experience on the first few days after surgery?

Your eye may be sensitive to the touch and maybe even a little scratchy for a few days. You will need to administer your eye drops on the schedule provided by your doctor and return for your scheduled follow-up examination to ensure the best possible outcomes from the surgery. Your doctor will most likely advise you that it is okay to resume your normal daily activities such as reading, writing, watching TV, and walking, if you feel up to it. Your doctor will also probably advise that you wear your protective eye covering while you sleep.

#### Are there any activities I should avoid immediately after and in the first week after surgery?

It is important that you avoid rubbing your eye or getting anything in your eye, even water, which could increase the chance of infection. You should not wear eye make-up until your doctor tells you that it is okay, and you should avoid sleeping on the side of the eye that has been operated on.

You should also avoid any kind of straining or activities that could increase the pressure on your eye, including bending over and lifting heavy objects.

### Cataract Surgery Recovery Facts and Statistics

The success rate for cataract surgery is greater than 97 percent<sup>1</sup>, with success defined as people restored to their everyday activities with significantly improved vision.

Most complications from cataract surgery are very rare if you are in good health and have no serious additional eye conditions such as diabetic retinopathy. The most likely complication, a secondary cataract, can develop anywhere from two to four months after surgery and occurs when the membrane holding the new lens develops a cloudiness and thus blurs your vision. If you develop a secondary cataract, your doctor will perform a painless outpatient procedure called a YAG laser capsulotomy.

To learn more about cataracts, treatment options, and life after cataracts visit

[www.CataractSurgery.com](http://www.CataractSurgery.com).

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### What about dry eyes?

Implant surgery typically has minimal influence on dry eyes, however your physician may choose to administer some mild dry eye therapy (eye drops) to ensure you are as comfortable as possible and your vision is as good as possible.

### Will I have any unusual vision phenomena after surgery?

Occasionally in your early healing phase, you will see some glare and halos (blurry or hazy vision) around lights at night. This is a normal response to eye surgery of this type and will reduce with time. Talk to your doctor if you experience this symptom.

### When will I need to have my eyes checked after surgery?

Your doctor will advise you based on your procedure. Typically, the doctor will see you one day after surgery, after 2 to 4 weeks and again around 3-6 months after surgery. Thereafter, an annual exam is typical.

### After surgery, will I need glasses?

If your doctor has implanted a monofocal intraocular lens you may need glasses. A monofocal IOL only has one focus point, and it allows you to focus on objects in the distance.

If your doctor has implanted a multifocal IOL, there is a significant chance that you may not need glasses. For example, around 80 percent of people in the FDA trial for a specific type of multifocal IOL, the AcrySof® ReSTOR® lens, reported never needing glasses. However, there is a small chance that you will need glasses for some tasks through the healing or adaptation period. There is a much greater chance that you may only need time to adapt.

If your doctor has implanted a toric IOL, such as the AcrySof® Toric lens, that also corrects your astigmatism, whether you will need glasses or not depends on whether you were also nearsighted, farsighted, or presbyopic prior to receiving the implant. If you wore glasses before simply to correct your astigmatism, then you might not need glasses after surgery. If you wore glasses to read prior to surgery you will still need them post cataract surgery.

### Is there anything I can do to speed up my recovery?

While cataract surgery is the most performed and successful surgery worldwide, it is still surgery and you will need some time to recover. Since clear vision depends on both the eye and the brain working together, the best thing you can do to insure a speedy recovery is to resume your normal activities as soon as your doctor recommends that you do so. Do the things you do everyday—read, watch television, work on crafts or use the computer. Drive and engage in physical activities. Perform a range of activities that require a full range of vision. And be patient—your new IOL is a tool that your body has to learn how to use.

### When will I be able to return to my normal activities?

You should be able to return to normal activities within several days and be able to drive and return to work within 2-5 days if you are comfortable with your vision.

### Is this a quick fix like LASIK? Will I be able to see great on the next day after surgery?

While cataract surgery itself is very quick, your vision will not be optimal immediately after the surgery. Many patients do experience a big improvement to their vision right after the surgery, but your vision may not reach its optimal state until 2-4 months afterwards.

### How long will it take for me to adapt? When can I expect that my vision will be as good as it's going to get?

You will be adapting over the next 2-4 months and may achieve your best vision at that time.

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### **Can I develop astigmatism as a complication of cataract surgery?**

Yes. However, only a small percentage of people who have cataract surgery actually develop an astigmatism as a result of the surgery. If you do develop astigmatism, it may be necessary to refine your vision. Surgeons may choose treatment options such as a limbus relaxing incision (LRI) <gl> or an excimer laser treatment (LASIK). This will make your healing time a little longer than normal, but you should be able to enjoy the same good result.

### **I've had cataract surgery on one eye, and my doctor recommends that I have it on the other. Should I do this?**

Yes. Even though you may not feel that you have adjusted fully since the first surgery, it is important to remember that optimal vision is dependent upon both eyes working as well as possible together.

### **Can a cataract come back?**

No. Because removing a cataract involves replacing your natural lens with an artificial intraocular lens, you can never "grow" another cataract on the artificial lens. However, you may develop something called a "secondary cataract," which is simply a clouding of the membrane that holds the intraocular lens. This situation is easily treated with a common, painless procedure using a YAG laser.

### **What is a YAG laser?**

YAG stands for yttrium-aluminum-garnet. A YAG laser is the type of laser used to perform YAG laser capsulotomies, which are necessary when a secondary cataract has developed post surgery.

### **What is the success rate for cataract surgery?**

The success rate for cataract surgery is greater than 97percent<sup>1</sup>, with success defined as people restored to their everyday activities with significantly improved vision.

### **Will I be able to go through metal detectors without setting them off?**

Yes. IOLs are not made of metal and will not set off a metal detector. They are actually made of plastic, silicone or acrylic.

### **Will I be able to have an MRI?**

Yes. IOLs are not made of metal and will not cause MRI complications. They are actually made of plastic, silicone or acrylic.

### **What is the lifespan of an IOL? Can an IOL ever "go bad?"**

An IOL can never go bad. IOLs are made of durable materials, and implant patients can expect their lenses to last throughout their lifetimes.

<sup>1</sup> "The Aging Eye: A Special Health Report from Harvard Medical School," Ed. Fine, Laura C. M.D and Heier, , Jeffrey S. M.D., copyright 2006, Harvard Health Publications, Boston, MA.

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