

Life After Cataracts: Cataract Surgery Recovery Basics



Cataract surgery is the most performed surgery in the world and the surgery with the highest success rate (over 97 percent)¹. However, it is still surgery and knowing some basic things about the recovery period will help both patients and caregivers adjust.

Immediately to 24 Hours After Surgery

After surgery, you will not be allowed to drive for 24 hours, so someone else will need to drive you home. Either before or immediately after surgery, you should have your prescriptions filled at the pharmacy. Use your medications exactly as your doctor has recommended.

Stinging, burning, and a slight grittiness in the eye are normal following surgery; do not rub or put pressure on your eye. If you have any discharge issuing from your eye, use a damp, warm washcloth to wipe the discharge away. Your doctor will tell you what is normal to expect.

On the day of the surgery, your doctor will probably advise that it is okay to resume light activities such as reading, writing, watching TV, and walking. You may be tempted to do more, since your vision will most likely be significantly improved, but you have just had surgery, so take it easy.

You may take a shower or a bath, but keep your eyes closed.

Two Days to One Month After

The next day, you will have a follow-up exam at your doctor's office. Be sure to bring all your medications to the visit. Your doctor will check your progress and provide you with additional advice on how to recover. If you are in good health, your doctor will probably advise that it is okay to resume sexual activity and exercise, even heavy exercise, after one week. Anything that exercises your full range of vision will help your eyes and brain learn how to work together to use your new tool, the IOL.

If you require glasses after surgery, at around two weeks after your last surgery, you will need to be fitted for new glasses.

Possible Complications

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 with an instrument called a YAG laser, during which he or she will create a small hole in the membrane to let light through.

¹ "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.

The recovery process described here is meant to be representative of most cataract procedures, which occur without complications. Individual results may vary. No information contained here is intended to substitute for a physician's advice. Always consult with your physician regarding any specifics about your recovery.

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

www.CataractSurgery.com.

**Find more printable documents like
this one in the "Print & Go" boxes
throughout the site.**