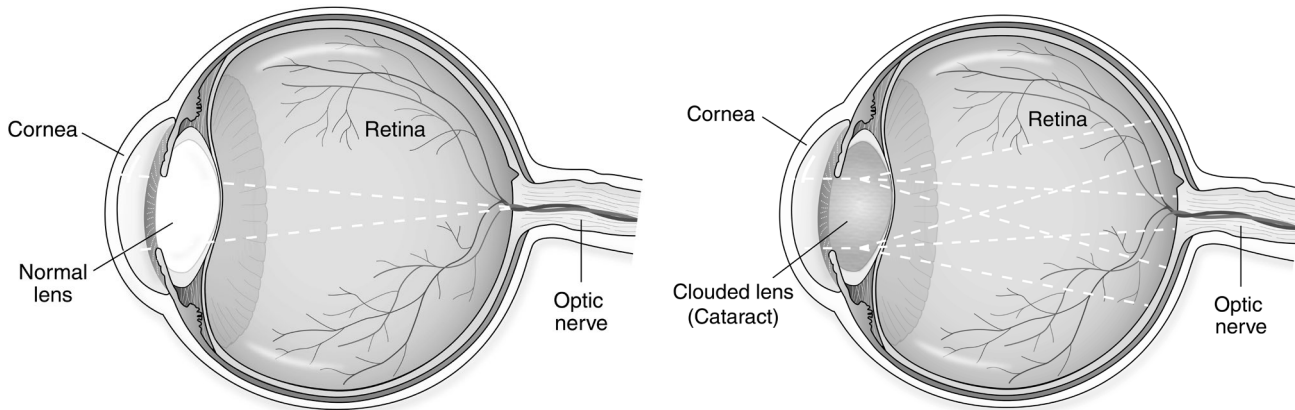


## Standard Cataract Surgery for Adults



Light rays scatter when entering the eye through a cloudy lens causing/resulting in blurry vision.

### What is a cataract?

A cataract is a clouding or cloudy area in the natural lens of the eye. Your lens is behind the colored part of your eye (iris). Its job is to focus light onto the back of your eye. Some cataracts prevent light from reaching the back of the eye or cause the light image to be out of focus.

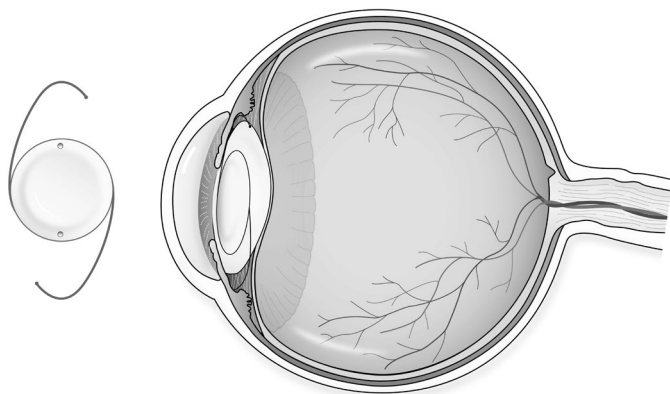
### What is cataract surgery?

Cataract surgery helps you see better. It replaces your natural lens with a clear artificial one. Drops are put in the eye to open the pupil giving access to the lens.

The surgery is most often done under local anesthetic. This means that you are awake. We will give you pills or IV medicine to help you relax. We will numb your eye by either an eye drop or an injection around the eye.

The most common type of cataract surgery is **phacoemulsification**. The doctor or a laser makes a small cut at the edge of the colored part of your eye. This is called an incision. The doctor then uses a small ultrasound tool to break the lens into tiny pieces. Sometimes a laser is used for this too. These pieces are then removed through the tiny incision using lots of water. In most cases, the doctor inserts the artificial lens through the incision.

The incision may seal by itself or may be closed with stitches. At the end of surgery, a shield will be placed on the eye.



Posterior chamber lens  
(behind iris)

## How do I prepare for cataract surgery?

### Before Surgery

Arrange for someone to help:

- Drive you to and from the surgery center.
- Stay with you for the first 24 hours.
- Drive you to your post-op visit.

We will likely fax the prescriptions to your pharmacy. Pick up your eye drops **at least one week** before surgery and start using them as scheduled.

You will need to have an exam before the day of surgery. This may also include blood tests, an EKG, or chest x-ray. We will talk to you about any medicines to stop taking while you prepare for surgery.

We will call you 1-2 days before surgery to tell you what time to arrive and when to stop eating and drinking.

### Day of Surgery

- Bathe and remove all nail polish and make-up. Take off all jewelry, do not wear perfumes or deodorants.
- Bring a photo ID, insurance card, eye drops, eye drop schedule and **this** instruction sheet.

### How do I care for my eye after surgery?

#### Shield and Drops

- You will have a shield on your eye after surgery. You can remove this the morning after surgery.
- Wear the shield when sleeping for 1 week after surgery. After the first night, you may sleep on either side. Wear dark sunglasses when outside as the eye might be more sensitive to light.
- The surgery center will tell you when to start the eye drop schedule.

#### Pain

It is normal to have a scratchy feeling in the eye for a couple of days after surgery. Call your doctor if you have an ache that is not controlled with acetaminophen (Tylenol<sup>®</sup>).

## **Activity**

- Shower or bathe like normal but be careful not to get soap into your eyes. Be careful stepping in the shower.
- You may watch TV and read. You may need reading glasses. Often, an over the counter pair will work. You can discuss this with your doctor.
- No swimming or sitting in hot tubs for 2 weeks.
- Be careful on stairs and do not drive until cleared by your doctor. You may have trouble with depth perception for a bit after surgery.
- Moderate exercise or sex will not harm the eye. Only light activity for 1 week. No lifting more than 25 pounds for 1 week. A good rule is that if it makes you “red in the face,” avoid it for one week.
- If you have had a multifocal or toric lens, no jumping or jolting activities (horseback riding or aerobics) for 2 weeks.
- Do not rub your eye for at least 1 month.
- Most people feel well enough to travel 2 days after their surgery. This includes air travel. We suggest that you do not travel to remote areas for 1 week after surgery.

## **When will I get new glasses?**

- Most patients receive new eyeglasses 4-6 weeks after surgery, if needed. We need the eye to heal and the swelling to settle before you get new glasses or the prescription might change.
- A doctor might suggest an over-the-counter pair of glasses to help during this time.
- If you have astigmatism, you may have trouble with your vision until you are fitted with glasses.
- If you have other eye diseases such as macular degeneration or glaucoma, you may have trouble with your vision even after your cataract is removed.

## **When to Call**

- An increase in swelling or redness
- Any increase in pain or discharge from the eye
- A decrease in vision
- Nausea or vomiting
- Questions or concerns

**Who to Call**

Clinic staff can be reached Monday through Friday from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm. Closed on holidays.

UW Health University Clinic  
**(608) 263-7171**  
2880 University Ave., Madison

UW Health Deming Way Clinic  
**(608) 824-3937**  
2349 Deming Way, Middleton

UW Health East Clinic  
**(608) 265-1270**  
5249 E. Terrace Dr., Madison

When the clinic is closed, call the paging operator at **(608) 262-0486**. Ask for the “ophthalmology resident on call.” Give your name and phone number with the area code. The doctor will call you back.

The toll-free number is:  
**1-800-323-8942.**

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2020 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#4205