

# Cataract Surgery

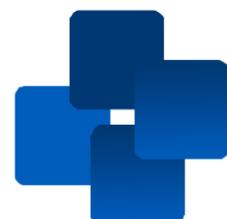
Department of Ophthalmology

Patient Information

**Please ensure that you complete the health questionnaire that is within the envelope before you attend your clinic appointment. Please then bring it with you together with your latest optician report.**

**If you have had any laser corrective surgeries, please bring all the relevant paper work with you as well.**

**If you attend an anti-coagulation clinic, please bring all your paperwork / yellow booklet with you to show the doctor your last blood test and what your therapeutic range is.**



## Patient Information – Cataract Surgery

### Department of Ophthalmology

#### Welcome to the Ophthalmic Department

We have compiled this booklet to help answer any questions you may have regarding your operation that you have been referred for. It will also remind you of instructions which the doctor or nurse may give. Please feel free to ask any further questions you may have.

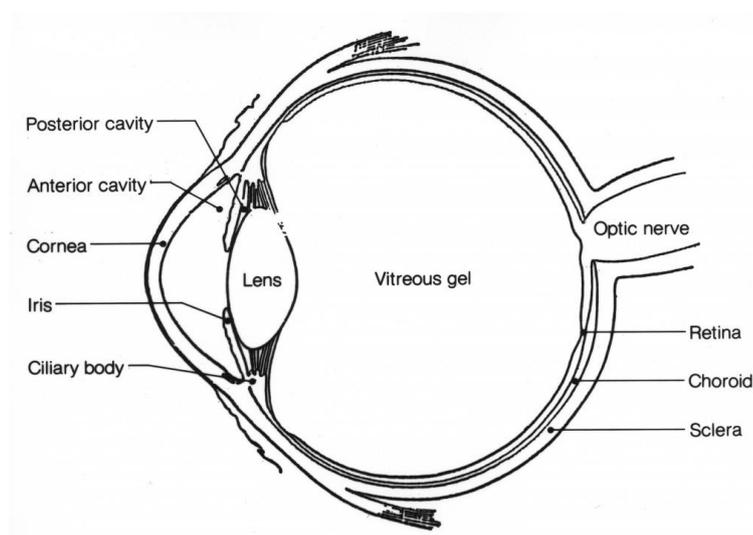
#### What is a cataract?

Behind the coloured part of your eye is a clear lens which focuses the light that enters your eye allowing you to see clearly. This lens can become cloudy which then makes it difficult to see. This condition is known as a cataract.

If the vision gets bad enough to cause problems, the cataract can be removed by means of an operation.

The purpose of the operation is to replace the cloudy lens (cataract) with a plastic lens, known as the lens implant. This will not harm your eye.

#### Cross Section of the Eye



Either at your clinic appointment or your pre-assessment appointment measurements of your eye will be recorded.

**If you wear contact lenses, you must leave them out before having the measurements on your eyes, as these measurements are used to assess the strength of the lens implant. The amount of time you have to leave them out varies depending on the type of lens you wear:**

- Soft contact lenses – two weeks
- Gas permeable contact lenses – four weeks
- Hard contact lenses – four weeks

If you have had any laser corrective surgery you need to bring with you your relevant paperwork which is very important to enable us to calculate the lens that is required. You may need to attend an additional clinic appointment for more measurements which is completed at the New QEII Hospital.

The lens required for your operation is calculated using these measurements. They come in a range of strengths, just like glasses. The implant chosen is usually the one that will give you the best distance after the operation.

The calculation is only estimation and you may need glasses after the operation to fine tune your vision. It is unlikely that strong glasses will be needed. Reading glasses are nearly always needed. However, we do advise you to wait four weeks after the operation before going to your optician.

If you require surgery to both eyes we recommend that you wait until your second operation has been performed before going to the opticians. If you have suitable reading glasses you may use them until you have your eyes re-tested.

If you do not have any reading glasses you may purchase 'off the peg' reading glasses until your second operation.

## **Anaesthesia**

This procedure may be carried out under topical, local or general anaesthetic.

### **Topical Anaesthetic:**

This is the most common type of anaesthesia used for cataract surgery at the Treatment Centre and involves the instillation of numbing eye drops before and during the procedure. You will stay awake during the procedure.

## **Local Anaesthetic:**

With this method you remain awake. The local anaesthetic is given by firstly instilling local anaesthetic drops, followed by a local anaesthetic being injected around the eye using a fine tube.

A small needle called a cannula or venflon may be inserted into the back of your hand through which drugs can be given if needed.

## **General Anaesthetic:**

Occasionally a general anaesthetic is necessary. This means that you will be asleep during the operation. It may be necessary to perform a blood test, ECG and chest X-ray before the operation to ensure that you are medically fit for this type of anaesthetic. The final decision however, rests with the anaesthetist.

## **The Operation**

### **Topical and Local Anaesthetic Procedure:**

You will be escorted to the operating theatre.

The skin around your eye will be cleaned with antiseptic solution. A fine drape will be positioned over your face and chest with air flowing underneath it to ensure your comfort.

You will be aware of a bright light initially; this will fade after a few seconds.

The operation normally takes 15 - 20 minutes but may be as long as 45 minutes. You will be required to lay flat and keep your head still. During the operation you may feel water running over your eye and you may also hear an intermittent buzzing noise.

A member of the theatre staff will hold your hand during the operation if you wish. If at any point you feel uncomfortable or that you are going to cough or sneeze please alert the staff by squeezing the nurse's hand. This will allow the surgeon to halt the procedure.

When the operation is completed, a plastic shield is secured in place over your eye for protection. You will need to wear this for one week after your operation, please ensure that you have some surgical tape at home to keep it in place.

## General Anaesthetic Procedure

- It will be necessary to stop eating and drinking before the operation as instructed by the nursing staff.
- Your normal clothing will need to be removed as it is necessary to wear a special gown. This is to allow the anaesthetist to monitor your progress throughout the operation.
- A small needle will be inserted in to the back of your hand through which drugs will be given to send you to sleep.
- When the operation is completed a plastic shield will be secured in place over your eye for protection.
- You will be transferred to the recovery room where your blood pressure and pulse will be monitored.
- Once you are recovered we will help you to change back into your day clothes. You will need to have eaten and passed urine before we will be able to discharge you home.

## Going Home

Please arrange for a responsible adult (18 years of age or over) to collect you after the operation. If you have had a general anaesthetic someone will need to stay with you overnight. You will need to be taken home in a private car or taxi. **Please do not use public transport.**

For patients having local and topical anaesthetic, you will be allowed to go home approximately half an hour after the surgery. For those having a general anaesthetic, you will be here for a minimum of three hours following surgery.

## Risks and Benefits of Cataract Surgery

All operations have a degree of risk however, more than 95% of patients have improved eyesight following cataract surgery providing there are no other problems with your eye.

There is a very small risk of complication which may affect your vision permanently and whilst precautions are taken at the time of surgery, it is not always possible to predict whether you will be affected.

### Risks:

- High pressure in the eye.
- Infection.
- Haemorrhage (bleeding) in the eye.

- 1:1,000 risk of severe and permanent visual loss.
- About 1:100 risk of requiring additional surgery to rectify a problem.
- 1 in 20 operations have less serious complications, which may require further treatment at the time of surgery or following the operation.
- 1 in 10 patients need laser treatment at some time in the future for opacity of the capsule behind the implant.

### **Benefits:**

- Improved vision.
- Better colour perception.

### **Before Your Admission**

- Ensure you have arranged transport to and from the Treatment Centre.
- Please bath or shower the day before your admission.
- **Please inform the ward staff if you have experienced a cough, cold or any sticky eye discharge two days before your admission.**

### **On The Day of Your Operation**

- Wear something comfortable on the day, preferably front opening so that it will be easy for you to remove when you get home.
- Please bring a clean pair of comfortable slippers.
- For general anaesthetic procedures please follow the instructions about eating and drinking given to you at the pre-assessment.
- Take tablets and medicines as usual unless instructed otherwise at pre-assessment.
- Please do not wear any make up and remove nail varnish and false nails prior to the operation.
- Please be aware that if you do bring any valuables into hospital then it is your responsibility to look after them.

### **On Admission**

- Your nurse will check your details on admission and check the discharge arrangements. Please be aware that we **do not** have the facilities for relatives to stay with you. We will call them when you are ready to be collected from the unit.
- You will have a visit from the surgeon and the theatre team.

- Additional eye drops which enlarge the pupil and/ or anaesthetise (numb) the eye may be put in before the operation. These may sting a little.
- A member of staff will escort you to the operating theatre.
- After your operation you will be offered refreshments.
- Your pulse and blood pressure will be recorded.
- The nurse will give you some eye drops to put in at home with full instructions on how often to use them. You will also be given an instruction leaflet advising you on what you can or cannot do following surgery.
- A contact telephone number will be given to you to call should you have any problems following discharge.
- An appointment will be sent to you by post to return to the Ophthalmology Clinic for a check-up.

## After Care

- Eye drops – please use the eye drops as instructed.
- Rubbing the eye – do not rub the affected eye when you get home.
- Driving- do not drive unless you are certain that your vision satisfies the legal driving requirements.

Following the surgery it is possible that you may experience any of the following:

- **Headache/aching around the eyes** - take any usual pain relief medication. If the pain gets worse call the number provided.
- **Double vision** - this will gradually wear off in two hours.
- **Bloodshot eyes** - this will gradually disappear over the following days.
- **Watering eyes** - use clean tissues to gently wipe under the eye. If your eye becomes very sticky call the number provided.
- **Blurred vision** - this will gradually clear. If your vision gets worse, call the number provided.

**If you have any concerns or require any further information please contact the Urgent Eye Clinic on the details shown overleaf.**

## **Urgent Eye Clinic – Opening times:**

- Monday - Friday: 9am to 7pm.
- Saturday: 9am to 12:30pm.
- Closed from Saturday after 12:30pm until Monday at 9am.
- Closed Bank Holidays - please attend your local A&E department.

## **Contact details:**

The Lister Treatment Centre  
Lister Hospital  
Coreys Mill Lane  
Stevenage  
Hertfordshire SG1 4AB

Telephone 01438 288122 - Select Menu Option 2 or 4

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