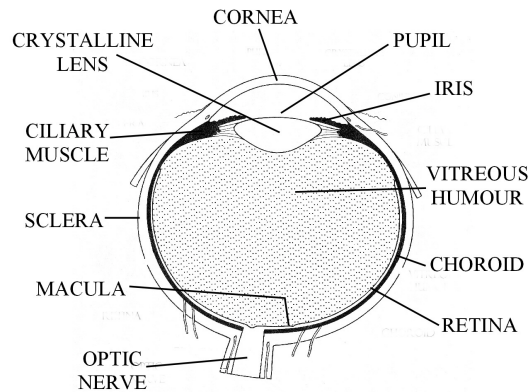


cataract



What is a Cataract?

Cataract is caused by the lens inside the eye becoming cloudy. This can cause blurred vision, dazzling from bright lights, and can even make things look double.

What Causes Cataract?

Cataracts are more likely in the elderly, although research has found that there may be a link to smoking, ultra violet, poor diet and family history. They can be associated with some conditions such as diabetes, or to some medications or following eye injury.

Can Cataracts be Treated?

An operation is carried out to remove the cataract and replace it with a clear plastic implanted lens.

What Does the Operation Involve?

Firstly, several measurements are taken of the eye to calculate the correct implant lens power. During the operation itself the cataract is broken up into a mush, which is then removed from the eye through a tube – a process called *phaco-emulsification*. The cataract is then replaced with a plastic implant. The operation lasts about fifteen minutes or so, and you can usually go home the same day

Does it Hurt?

The operation is usually done under local or general anaesthetic, so you cannot see or feel what is going on. Some surgeons even perform the operation using topical anaesthetic i.e. drops only. There is only a little discomfort afterwards.

How Soon Will The Eye See?

The eye is patched after the operation, but usually the following day it is removed, and drops are used to help the healing process. The vision is improved straight away.

Will Spectacles Still be Required?

Usually, yes. For distance vision, spectacles may be required to focus the image precisely. Spectacles are nearly always still required for reading.

There are other implants available which are bifocal or even *accommodative*, which can change focus like the natural lens, but these are not available on the NHS.

Is the Vision Any Different After the Operation?

Colours appear much brighter, and the vision much clearer. Sometimes bright light can cause problems at first, but this gets better with time.

Can the Cataract Develop Again?

No, although the other eye may become affected. Sometimes the vision may start to get misty again, but this can be treated with laser.

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