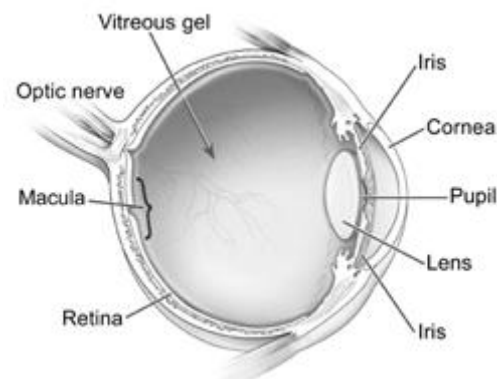


Cataract Surgery

The procedure

A cataract is a clouding of the lens in the eye that affects vision. Cataract surgery replaces the cloudy lens with a clear plastic lens.



What are the reasons for doing this?

A cataract needs to be removed when vision loss interferes with your everyday activities, such as driving, reading or watching TV. Some times a cataract needs to be removed if it prevents the examination or treatment of another eye problem.

The aim of cataract surgery is to correct the decreased vision caused by the cataract. Cataract surgery will not correct other causes of decreased vision, such as glaucoma, diabetes, or age-related macular degeneration.

Are there any alternatives?

You and your doctor will probably have discussed any other suitable treatments before now. However please ask if you want any further advice about any alternatives that might be suitable for you, including the option of no treatment.

What are the risks?

Cataract surgery is usually quite comfortable. Mild discomfort for the first 24hrs is typical, severe pain is unusual and should be reported to the hospital.

It is possible that your vision could be made worse, in some cases complications may occur weeks, months or even years later.

Risks of cataract surgery can include

- complications of removing the natural lens
- complications associated with the new lens – incorrect strength or dislocation of the implant
- complications associated with local anaesthesia injections around the eye
- high pressure inside the eye
- swelling of the retina – macular oedema
- detached retina which can lead to loss of sight
- Infection of the eye – endophthalmitis – which can lead to loss of sight or even the eye.
- allergy to the medication used
- Bruising of the eye or eyelids
- Clouding of the cornea

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Pre-assessment

Before your operation it will be necessary to attend a pre-assessment clinic. At this visit the nursing staff will measure your eye, this is called biometry, and allows the surgeon to choose the lens type to be implanted. They will ask a series of questions and discuss the operation and post operative care. If however you have been through this process (if you have already had one cataract removed) then the nurse will contact you at home by phone.

Consent

You will be asked to give your consent to this treatment following discussion with medical or nursing staff. It is important that you understand what is involved and you will have an opportunity then to ask any questions that you might have. A sample of the consent form may be provided for you to read so that you are familiar with the form. Please do not sign this sample – it is for your information only.

Training

We are a training unit for future ophthalmic surgeons. Some or all of your surgery may be carried out by a surgeon in training under the direct supervision of a senior consultant or associate specialist. This information is listed on the consent form.

Plan ahead for discharge home

If you think you may have any difficulties, please discuss these at your pre-operative assessment appointment.

More information about intraocular lens (IOL) biometry

While biometry, the method used to calculate the power of the new lens, is very accurate in the majority of patients, the final result may be different from what was planned. As the eye heals, the new lens can shift very slightly toward the front or the back of the eye. The amount of shift is not the same in everyone and it may cause different vision than predicted.

Patients who are highly nearsighted or highly farsighted have the greatest risk of differences between planned and actual outcomes.

Patients who have had LASIK or other laser refractive surgeries are especially difficult to measure precisely.

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Your lens implant will focus for a fixed distance. Usually people choose to have good distance vision requiring little or no glasses correction and are happy to use reading glasses. Your surgeon will discuss the best option for you prior to your operation.

The NHS does not implant multifocal or accommodating lenses. These lenses aim to correct both distance and near vision but may not be suited to everyone.

The NHS does not routinely implant toric lenses i.e. a lens that will correct corneal astigmatism i.e. (curvature of the cornea that requires a specific additional correction in your glasses that is separate to correcting long or short sight).

Monovision is the term used to describe the practice of using one eye corrected for distance vision and one eye corrected for near vision either with a pair of glasses or contact lens. If you have not been using this method prior to your cataract surgery it will not routinely be offered as an option when choosing your lens implant.

What happens on the day of surgery?

You will be given a time and date for surgery. Please expect to be in the Day Surgery Unit for either a whole morning or afternoon. The nurse in the unit will check your details and check consent with you and answer any questions you may have. You will then have eye drops instilled to open the pupil. You will be asked to put a theatre gown over your own clothes and will be escorted to the anaesthetic room by one of the nursing team.

What should I expect during the operation?

Your eye will be made numb by the doctor or anaesthetist using a small injection. You will be required to lay flat and still during the operation usually for 20 - 40mins. Your face will be covered to allow the operation to be done under sterile conditions. A small amount of oxygen will be given to you under the drape.

After the operation a pad and shield will be placed over your eye and you will be escorted to the day unit.

When can I go home?

After your return to the Day Unit you will be given refreshment and time to recover, usually around 30 minutes. You will need to be accompanied home, and we advise that you do not use public transport. You should not drive until advised that you are fit to do so by your Doctor or Consultant. The nurse in the unit will give you your information regarding removal of your eye pad, usually the next morning, and an instruction on when to start your eye drops. You will not need to attend the clinic the next day to have your dressing removed unless you are asked to do so by the doctor.

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Your nurse will give you a pack and instructions on how to clean your eye. The plastic shield should be retained as you need to wear this at night for four nights.

What should I expect after the operation?

If you experience any discomfort you may take pain relief such as Paracetamol (but not aspirin as this may cause bleeding)

It is normal to feel itching, sticky eyelids and mild discomfort for a while after cataract surgery. Some fluid discharge is common. After 1-2 days even mild discomfort should disappear. In most cases, healing will take about six weeks after which new glasses can be prescribed by your optician.

You will be given eye drops to reduce inflammation, for three weeks

- week 1 – 4 times a day
- week 2 – 3 times a day
- week 3 – 2 times a day

You will have a follow up appointment in eye clinic, a week to 10 days after your surgery.

Is there anything I can't do after surgery?

Please do not rub your eye as this could disturb the healing of the eye around the operation site.

Certain symptoms could mean that you need prompt treatment. **Please contact the hospital immediately** if you have any of the following symptoms

- excessive pain
- loss of vision
- increasing redness of the eye
-

How do I contact the hospital?

If you require URGENT advice in the first 24 hours following surgery please telephone the hospital on 01423 885959 and ask to speak to the 'eye doctor on call'.

If after this time you are concerned about anything regarding your operation please call the number as above out of office hours or contact the Ophthalmic Outpatient Department on 01423 553195.

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Further Information

Other sources of useful information can be found at:

NHS Direct 0845 4647

Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust website www.hdft.nhs.uk

Patient Experience helpline 01423 555499 (Monday – Friday 9.30am – 4pm). E-mail:

thepatientexperienceteam@hdft.nhs.uk

National Eye Institute <http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/>

Department of Ophthalmology
Harrogate District Hospital
Lancaster Park Road
Harrogate HG2 7SX
01423 885959
Direct line: 01423 553195
www.hdft.nhs.uk

If you require this information in an alternative language or format (such as Braille, audiotape or large print), please ask the staff who are looking after you.