
What Are Cataracts?

Penn Highlands Eye Center



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Cataracts

A cataract is formed when the lens or part of the lens inside the eye becomes “cloudy” and no longer allows the proper amount of light to pass through that lens. Cataracts, unfortunately, are typically just a normal symptom of the aging process. This is why they normally affect people who are age 60 or over.

SYMPTOMS OF A CATARACT INCLUDE:

- Cloudy or blurry vision
- Colors seem faded
- Lights seem to be too bright or cause glare
- Lights seem to have a halo around them
- Vision at night decreases
- Double vision or seeing multiple images in one eye
- Need for frequent prescription changes on eyeglasses or contacts

If left untreated, a cataract can cause blindness, but for the vast majority of people it is a condition that is easily corrected. In fact, cataract surgery is the most common surgery performed today.

The eye surgeons at Penn Highlands Eye Center perform thousands of cataract surgeries each year and can help you regain a more normal level of sight when cataracts begin to cloud your vision.

AFTER CATARACT SURGERY

You'll be happy to know there are many advantages cataract surgery provides that you'll appreciate in your everyday life. For example, many people who have cataract surgery find that they no longer need to wear glasses. Some find they don't need glasses to read, or have to wear glasses for distance vision. All find that they can reduce their dependency on glasses.

This means that before going ahead with the procedure you will need to discuss your options

with your doctor to decide what kind of lens would best suit your lifestyle.

YOUR OPTIONS

For people who spend a lot of time reading or working on a computer, your ophthalmologist might recommend a lens that works best for near vision. Others who play sports or do a lot of driving might choose a lens that mostly improves vision for distances. A third option that is suitable for some people (but not all) is a multifocal lens that has the potential to adjust both near and far vision. There's no one answer for everyone – it's usually a matter of deciding what will suit your lifestyle the best.

ADDED BENEFITS OF CATARACT SURGERY

For millions of patients, the most obvious benefit is that they can enjoy quality of vision again. Most notably, will be that colors are brighter, images are sharper and objects that were hard to see before surgery are back in focus again. Many comment that they suffer less from the glare of the sun or from headlights at night. While the improvements depend on the individual, many research studies show that cataract surgery has many lifestyle benefits for reading, working, driving, playing sports and so on.

The research also indicates that other advantages include more independence, improved self-confidence, better mental health, safety, a reduction in falls, a longer life expectancy and a greater enjoyment of social activities. Improved vision immeasurably enhances overall life satisfaction and enjoyment.

Importantly, there is no age at which we are “too old” to have cataract surgery as the visual benefits can be of value regardless of age. Cataract surgery has been shown to be of value in those with other disabilities such as deafness and early dementia.
