



Understanding Cataracts

A Simple Guide to Cataracts and Your Treatment Options



So You've Been Diagnosed With Cataracts



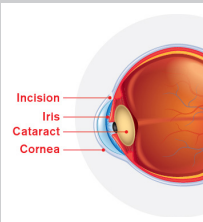
You're not alone. More than 20 million Americans have cataracts in one or both eyes. It is a common condition that is often a natural result of aging. However, cataracts can also be caused by other health-related conditions, such as diabetes, trauma, and the use of some medications.

The treatment for cataracts is also very common. Cataract surgery has been performed successfully for many years. In fact, in the U.S., it is the most common surgery performed, with more than 3 million performed annually.

What Is A Cataract?

The eye functions much like a camera. The cornea and lens of the eye work together to focus light directly onto the retina. This is similar to the way the lens of a camera focuses an image onto the film.

The term "cataract" refers to a lens that has developed some level of cloudiness. The level of cloudiness can vary, as can the exact progression of a cataract. The two most common symptoms of cataracts are glare with night vision and the feeling that things aren't as clear as they should be.



The diagram shows a cross-section of a human eye. A red line points to the 'Incision' on the cornea. Another red line points to the 'Iris' inside the eye. A third red line points to the 'Cataract' on the lens. A fourth red line points to the 'Cornea' at the front of the eye.

Fast Facts

- Cataract surgery is the most common surgery in the U.S.
- Cataracts are frequently a natural result of aging
- Surgery is often completed within 15 minutes

Cataract Treatment

If you are apprehensive about cataract surgery, relax. The cataract treatment is generally painless. An anesthesiologist administers medicine through an IV that helps the patient to relax. Cataract surgery is quick – and is typically completed in 15 minutes.

The cataract procedure involves replacing the original, cloudy lens with a new, clear artificial one, referred to as an intraocular lens. The surgeon begins by making a small incision on the cornea. The cloudy lens is fragmented into very tiny pieces using ultrasound waves, and removed through the small incision. The new intraocular lens is then inserted. Using the latest technological advances, Dr. Lindahl can perform cataract surgery without stitches and with minimal discomfort. With today's technology, typically there are no shots, no pain, and no patches during healing.

Your Treatment Options



Today, patients have more treatment choices than ever before. Some of the newer advancements in cataract surgery can help a patient with their overall eyesight issues such as nearsightedness, far sightedness, astigmatism, and presbyopia (the loss of the ability to change focus from distance vision to reading vision). Cataract patients now have the opportunity to fundamentally correct their eyes and their vision, improving their quality of vision to better than ever before. These newer treatment options may provide a greater overall quality of vision and better quality of life.

The Rochester Eye and Laser Center offers two treatment options for the cataract patient: Basic Cataract Surgery, and Custom Cataract Surgery. Dr. Lindahl will discuss these options with you and make a recommendation based on your particular needs and preferences.

Basic Cataract Surgery

With Basic Cataract Surgery, the cloudy crystalline lens is removed and replaced with a standard intraocular lens. This procedure will relieve the symptoms of cataracts, such as glare and blurry vision. However, the standard lens will not necessarily make the patient independent of prescription glasses. Most private insurances and Medicare plans will cover this procedure.

Premium Cataract Services

The Premium Cataract approach gives the patient the opportunity to obtain better quality vision than Basic Cataract Surgery. This approach can help reduce your dependency on prescription eyewear. This particular type of surgery requires a thorough pre-surgery examination to determine how to address specific conditions such as astigmatism.

Corneal astigmatism can be addressed with special surgical techniques, or with the use of a special intraocular lens known as a toric lens.

Our Premium Cataract Services provide the greatest range of vision. This approach includes using a specialized TORIC, multifocal, or Extended Depth of Focus intraocular lens. Dr. Lindahl will help you choose the right type of lens for your needs.

Dr. Lindahl will also determine if you are a good candidate for the revolutionary LenSx Femtosecond Laser System. This laser makes computer-controlled corneal incisions based on a detailed real-time 3-dimensional image of the eye. The LenSx option allows Dr. Lindahl to accomplish even greater vision outcomes and astigmatism control due to this precision and customization.

Premium Cataract Services and lenses often significantly reduce your need for glasses, depending on the lens choice.

Choosing Premium Cataract Services including Intraocular Lens and the LenSx Femtosecond Laser System requires more sophisticated and advanced pre-operative testing.

There are out-of-pocket expenses associated with this approach that are not covered by insurance or Medicare.

Refractive Lens Exchange For The Non-Cataract Patient

At times, the exchange of a lens is an appropriate vision correction strategy even for patients without cataracts. Replacing the natural lens with an artificial one may benefit patients with any of the following conditions:

- Severe nearsightedness
- Severe farsightedness
- Presbyopia
- Thin corneas



Lens replacement procedures are often recommended for patients who are motivated to become less dependent on glasses, but who are not able to have the LASIK procedure. The replacement of a clear crystalline lens with an artificial lens is called Refractive Lens Exchange (RLE). RLE removes the natural lens of the eye so a cataract will never develop – patients who have RLE will never have to have cataract surgery in the future.

Medicare and most private insurance will not cover Refractive Lens Exchange procedures. A Rochester Eye and Laser Center specialist can review the costs of this treatment with you.



Laser Treatments After A Lens Procedure

A laser procedure may be recommended following a cataract procedure or Refractive Lens Exchange.

In some instances, cloudy cells form in the center of the eye following cataract or Refractive Lens Exchange treatment, causing blurred, hazy vision, or glare problems when driving at night. This is known as “posterior capsular haze” and occurs in as many as 40% of cataract or Refractive Lens Exchange patients. Yag Laser Posterior Capsulotomy is a quick and painless laser treatment that can be used to relieve the patient of this condition. Most private insurance and Medicare cover this type of treatment.

There are other instances where procedures such as LASIK will be recommended to fine tune the results of a cataract or Refractive Lens procedure. In most instances, there will be a three to six month period of healing before the laser treatment is done. A Rochester Eye and Laser Center specialist can review the costs of this treatment with you.

What To Do Before Your Appointment

- No hard contacts for 3 weeks prior to appointment
- No soft contacts for 2 weeks prior to appointment
- Do not take any eye drops the day of your procedure.

Questions?

Call our Cataract Surgical Coordinator at 585.342.7985.



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