

Cataract Surgery

What is a cataract?

When the natural lens of the eye becomes cloudy it is called a cataract. A cataract is inside the eye and NOT on the front surface. As a cataract progresses, your vision becomes blurred.

Before surgery

You cannot drive after surgery so make arrangements for someone to stay in the building while you are having surgery, take you home and stay with you for the night. If you do not arrange this your surgery may be cancelled.

The day of surgery

Leave all jewellery and valuables at home.

You need to come at your assigned appointment time. It takes 1½ hours to get your eye ready for surgery. Special drops need to be put in your eye.

Wear a comfortable top and pants. When you get ready for surgery, you remove your top only and keep your pants, socks and shoes on. Ladies keep their bras on.

What happens next?

A nurse puts special drops or gel in your eye that makes your pupil large so the cataract can be removed.

Your nurse puts a thin tube into a vein in your arm. This is called an intravenous (IV) and is used to give you fluids and sedation in the operating room.

The surgeon comes to see you and puts his or her initials near the eye having the operation with a special pen.

You are then taken to the operating room. The surgical team greets you and checks your name and eye being done. This is called the 'surgical pause'.

Surgery is done using local anaesthetic. This means only your eye is frozen. You may feel pressure during the procedure. You are given pain medication when needed. The cataract is then replaced with a new lens called an implant. You may have an eye patch put on.

The operation takes about 30 minutes.

How will I feel after surgery?

Your eye may be red and tender to touch. You may have some discomfort. Your eye may feel gritty or like there is sand in it. Your eye may have a burning feeling. You may get a headache. **These feelings are normal.**

For pain or discomfort, you may have pain medication, such as Tylenol[®] or other medication ordered by your surgeon.

If the pain is severe after you go home, call your surgeon or go to the nearest Emergency.

When can I eat after surgery?

Eat a light snack or meal when you go home. You can then follow your usual diet. You cannot drink beer, wine or alcohol for 24 hours.

When do I go home?

Most people go home about 20 minutes after surgery.

When you come back from the operating room, your nurse monitors your blood pressure, heart, and oxygen for 10 minutes. You will have a drink and the IV tube is taken out of your arm. The nurse reviews the after surgery instructions with you and your care helper.

For your safety, your nurse helps you get up the first time after surgery. You then get dressed, use the washroom. A volunteer then takes you to the front door for pick-up by your support person.

What activities can I do at home?

You may watch TV in moderation. You may find your vision blurry at first. You may have a bath. Avoid getting soapy water in your eye. Do not wash your hair for 1 week.

Talk to your surgeon about bending and lifting. Most surgeons do not want you to lift for 1 week after surgery. **Follow your surgeon's instructions.** Generally, after 1 week, you may do light housework. Do not lift anything over 10 pounds or 4.5 kilograms the first day.

Avoid bending as much as you can.

After 4 weeks, most people can go back to their regular activities. You can talk to your surgeon about any activities you are concerned about.

You may need to wear an eye patch. If you do, follow your surgeon's instructions about when to wear it.

Follow any instructions your surgeon gives you about using eye drops or ointment.

Wear your glasses or sunglasses when outside during the day to protect your eye.

Wear your eye shield at night if you are using one. Put one strip of tape on the eye shield before you put it over the eye. Put the eye shield in place and add a second piece of tape to hold it in place.

Do not drive for 24 hours then follow your doctor's instructions about driving.

If you do not have special instructions, follow the steps on the next page to put in your drops or ointment.

Putting eye drops in:

1. Wash and dry your hands.
2. Read the label to check that you have the right medication.
3. Sit or lie down and tilt your head back at least 45 degrees.
4. Gently pull down the lower lid of your eye with one finger. This makes a small "pocket" between your eyelid and eyeball.
5. Hold the eye drop bottle with your other hand and rest your hand against your cheek bone.
6. Look up towards the top of your head and put a drop in the pocket formed between your eyelid and eyeball. Do not wipe your eyes.

- Avoid touching your eye with the tip of the bottle. Do not hold the bottle too high or the drop will splash and you will not get all of the medication in your eye.
- If you have trouble putting in the eye drops, ask a family member or friend to help you.
- You may wish to buy a drop aid from the drugstore. They can show you how to use it when you buy one.

Putting eye ointment in:

1. Wash and dry your hands.
 2. Warm the tube of ointment in your hand or pocket for 20 minutes. Do not store ointment in the refrigerator.
 3. Pull down your lower lid to make a small pocket between the lower lid and your eyeball.
 4. Gently put about ½ inch (1 cm) of medication in this pocket.
- Avoid touching your eye with the tip of the tube.
 - Eye ointment can make your vision blurry. Wait until you can see clearly before you start any activity.

When do I see the surgeon again?

You will be given an appointment to see your surgeon after surgery. It is important to keep this appointment so your surgeon can check your eye.

Bring all your eye medications and any forms you need filled out with you to this appointment.

When will I get new glasses?

Your surgeon will tell you when it is time to get a new prescription for glasses.