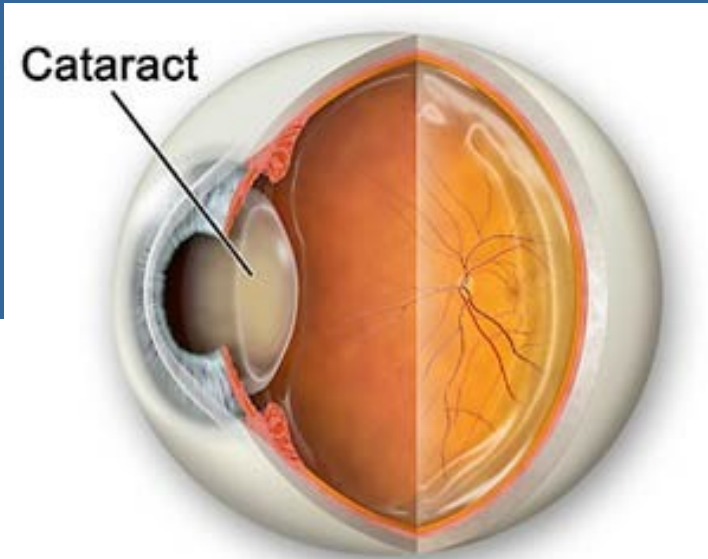


Cataracts



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St. Maarten Medical Center

Diagnosis of Cataracts

There is an eye lens in the eye. The eye lens is clear and ensures that you can see clearly (see figure 1). The eye lens can also become cloudy. This is a normal process that is associated with aging. A cloudy eye lens can also be congenital (cataract) or the result of an accident or inflammation of the eye. You will notice that your vision will start to blur, this is because the light cannot reach the inside of the eye as well as it used to (see figure 2). This condition is called a cataract and can only be remedied with an operation.

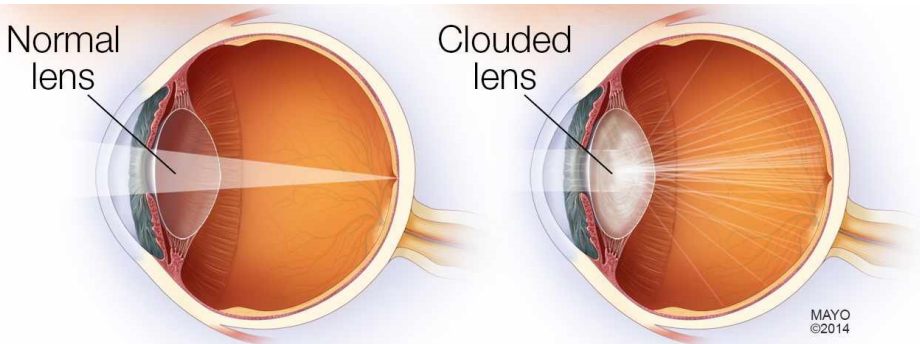


Figure 1: the healthy eye

Figure 2: eye with cataract

Pre-Operative Screening

Several preliminary examinations will be planned for you once you have to be scheduled for surgery. These tests are often carried out in the Eye Care clinic.

The nurse you will give you a full explanation of what to expect on the day of the operation. Your health and medicine use will be registered. It is recommended that you have a list of all current medications you are using with you when you come for consultation.

Lens measurement (oculometry)

During the cataract operation, the cloudy eye lens is replaced by an artificial lens. The strength of the artificial lens is different for everyone. In order to

determine the correct strength for you, a lens measurement is performed. Both eyes are measured during the lens measurement. The lens measurement is painless and takes about 15 minutes. The strength of the artificial lens also determines the possible strength of the corrective lens that is needed after the operation.

If you wear hard contact lenses, you must take them out at least four weeks before the lens measurement. If you wear soft contact lenses, you must do so two weeks before the measurement. Contact lenses can deform the cornea and thereby cause errors in the lens measurement.

There are several types of artificial lenses available. You will receive information from the Ophthalmologist about the advantages and disadvantages of each artificial lens:

- ◆ Standard artificial lens: to correct cataract.
- ◆ Toric artificial lens: to correct cataract and a cylinder deviation.
- ◆ Multifocal reading lens: to correct cataracts, spectacles and reading glasses.

Preparation for the Operation

The Ophthalmologist will prescribe medication (eye drops) prior to the initial operation. These are to be taken the evening before and the morning of the operation.

You may not wear eye makeup, nail polish or jewelry on the day of the operation. If you wear a hearing aid, you must take it out on the side of the eye to be operated.

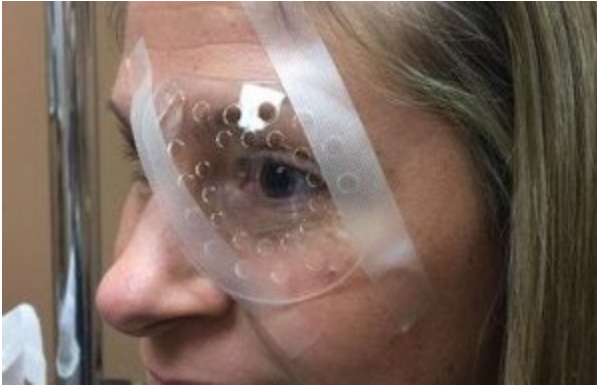


The Operation

During your cataract operation, the ophthalmologist makes two or three incisions of a few millimeters in the cornea. The ophthalmologist removes the cloudy eye lens through these two or three incisions and places the new artificial lens in the eye. The wound that develops during the operation is so small that it usually does not have to be sutured. After the surgery, your eye will be covered with a cap for protection.

After the Operation

A cataract operation under topical anesthesia takes place in outpatient treatment. This means that you can go home the same day. It is not recommended for you to drive yourself after the operation.



Surgical eye cap

You will receive a cap on the operated eye after the operation, so you will not be able to estimate depth and distances for a while. You are advised to bring someone to assist you with getting home safely after the operation. The ophthalmologist will examine you the day after your surgery. This will be followed by another checkup four weeks after the operation.

Post Operation Guidelines

Driving

You are not able drive yourself directly after the surgery. Ask your

ophthalmologist when you are allowed to drive again.

Protect your eye

Do not rub the operated eye for the first two weeks after the operation.

During the first two weeks after the operation we advise you:

- ◆ To wear protective glasses or your own (sun) glasses during the day; thus also during sports.
- ◆ To wear the cap at night to protect your eye. You do not have to put a new gauze between the cap and the eye.

Work

You may start working after surgery unless you have pain or experience a reduced vision. In that case, consult your ophthalmologist.

Physical exertion

You can bend / lift (up to twenty kilos), but it is advised to avoid intensive physical exertion in the first week. You can read, watch television and make use of a computer as much as you would like.

In principle, you can do simple exercises, such as golfing and cycling. We recommend that you wait one week with fitness and then take another three weeks to take care.

Showering / washing

You may take a shower and wash your hair.

Make-up

Do not wear any eye make-up during the first week after your operation.

On vacation

You are allowed to go on vacation/holiday, but please take into account the follow up visit four weeks after the surgery.

Swimming / sauna visit

You are not allowed to swim or visit a sauna during the first four weeks after the operation because of bacteria that may infect the eye.

Possible Side Effects

Blurred or reduced vision

The day after the operation, vision may be blurred or reduced. This can be caused by a temporary swelling of the cornea. This usually resolves the first week after the operation. It can also be caused by spectacle a change in the strength of your spectacles. If the vision gets worse, please contact the Eye Care Clinic.

Pain, redness and greatly reduced vision

After the operation, inflammation in the eye can occur as a result of a bacterial infection. This is a serious but very rare complication that occurs in 0.1% of cataract operations. This is often accompanied by severe pain, redness and greatly reduced vision. If you experience any of these symptoms, please contact the Eye Care Clinic immediately.

Redness and irritation

After the operation the eye can be red. A slight irritation or a grainy feeling is also often observed. This is caused by the wound and is normal. If the redness or irritation increases, contact the Eye Care Clinic.

Painful eye and headache

You can experience headaches or some discomfort in the operated eye the day and night after the surgery. You can take a mild painkiller to relieve this discomfort. If the eye becomes painful or headache increases, please contact the Eye Care Clinic.

Blurred vision due to cataract

10% to 30% of patients experience a decrease in vision after a few months to years after cataract surgery. This is called “ater cataract” and is caused by

opacification of your lens bag. The treatment consists of a painless outpatient laser treatment. If you notice a reduction in your vision, please contact the Eye Care Clinic.

Additional Information

Glare in the eye

Other people can see a sparkle in your eye. This is because your new lens reflects light such as a mirror.

Measuring new glasses

Your eye can no longer accommodate after the operation. This means that you can focus images close up less easily. You notice this, for example, while reading or watching a screen. Bifocal glasses or multifocal glasses help you see clearly/focus better and can resolve this problem.

Wait at least six weeks before fitting a new pair of glasses. In the meantime, just wear your old glasses; the old lens power cannot hurt your operated eye. If you find it annoying to wear your old glasses, you can discuss the possibility of temporary glasses at your local optician.



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