

Ophthalmology – Cataract Surgery

Introduction

A cataract is when the lens inside your eye becomes cloudy. The presence of a cataract typically causes blurred, hazy or less colourful vision. It can also cause glare or sensitivity to light which is often most noticeable with oncoming headlights when night driving.

Guidance for Patients

Cataracts usually develop slowly over a period of years causing gradual deterioration of vision. Some people may, however, experience more rapid deterioration of vision over a period of months with certain types of cataract. Cataracts typically develop in both eyes though not necessarily at the same time.

Aging is the most common cause of cataracts. The normal proteins in the lens start to break down causing the lens to become cloudy. It may be possible to improve your vision with a new spectacle (or contact lens) prescription. You should consider cataract surgery when your vision is making it difficult for you to complete your regular activities.

An optometrist is best placed to examine and test your eyes to make a diagnosis of cataract. This will include a refraction and visual acuity test which measures the sharpness and clarity of your vision. Your optometrist will discuss the potential benefit of cataract surgery if it is not possible to satisfactorily improve your vision with a new spectacle (or contact lens) prescription.

Cataracts can only be removed by surgery. During cataract surgery, an ophthalmic surgeon will remove your eye's cloudy lens and replace it with an artificial lens (called an intraocular lens). The benefits and potential complications of cataract surgery will be discussed before deciding to proceed with this treatment.

What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

You should seek medical advice if you feel that your symptoms are changing rapidly or unexpectedly.

If your optometrist has referred you for cataract surgery, it is usually helpful to seek their advice if you haven't yet been seen for an appointment in the ophthalmology service.

If you are already known to the ophthalmology service, the relevant contact details for non-emergency issues can be found on the correspondence that you will have already received.

Contact Us

For clinical queries or complications:

Cataract nurse telephone line: 01223 349260

For appointment queries:

Surgery Booking Office: 01223 254661

Email: OphthalmologySurgeryBookingTeam@addenbrookes.nhs.uk