
Patient information sent to patients with their clinic appointment

Cataract surgery

If you would like this information in another format or language please ask a member of our staff.

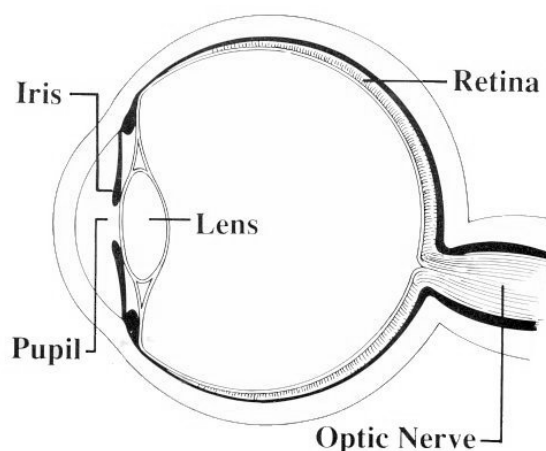
About this information: We hope this information will answer some of your questions about cataract surgery at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Here, we briefly explain about cataracts and what the operation involves. **If you decide that you do NOT want surgery at this time, let us know so we can offer your appointment to someone else.**

Consent form: When you come to your Assessment clinic, we will offer you further information including a consent form to take home with you. Please ask us about anything you wish to have explained in more detail or do not fully understand.

What is a cataract?

A 'cataract' refers to the clouding of the normally clear lens that is situated behind the pupil (dark centre) of the eye. A cataract usually occurs as a natural consequence of ageing.

A cross section of the eye



What is cataract surgery?

To treat cataracts we remove the cataract (cloudy lens) through a small wound in the eye and replace the lens with a clear lens implant. Surgery is the only way to remove a cataract. The aim is to improve your vision. At Addenbrooke's, an ophthalmologist (eye surgeon), who is a member of the Ophthalmology Team, will perform the operation. Most cataract operations can be performed using a local anaesthetic as day-surgery.

Day-surgery: If you have day surgery, you **do not** need to stay overnight in hospital. You will still need to make a visit to the hospital the day after the operation and for check up appointments. **You will need to arrange your own transport for these visits.**

Inpatient surgery: Some people, for medical reasons, will need an overnight stay in hospital. They might also need to have a general anaesthetic.

We will explain your choice of surgery and anaesthetic in more detail during the Assessment Clinic - your first visit to the Cataract Clinic.

At the assessment clinic:

- The specialist nurse and/or the doctor will see you.
- If you wear contact lenses, you will need to stop wearing them one week before your assessment.
- At this appointment, we will put some drops in your eyes, which will make your vision blurred for most of the day. It is, therefore, important that you **do not drive yourself** to the assessment appointment.
- We will examine your eyes and assess whether you are suitable to have day- or inpatient surgery.
- The nurse will also measure your eye to work out what lens implant to use.
- You will be in the clinic for about two hours.
- We will explain our recommendations, tell you more about the operation, give you a consent form to take home and some instructions for your next visit. Please ask us any questions.

We will do the cataract surgery at your next appointment, usually some weeks later.

What does the cataract operation involve?

- Most cataract operations are carried out under local anaesthetic. This numbs the eye area so you won't feel anything.
- We also use some eye drops to dilate the pupil of the eye, which makes your vision blurred so you won't see anything we are doing.
- The operation takes 20 to 40 mins.

After the operation:

- After a short period resting in the clinic afterwards, you can go home. It is important that you have a friend or relative to accompany you home and stay overnight with you. **You must not drive yourself.**
- The numbness in the eye usually fades after a few hours. For the first few hours, you might have a mild headache, your eye might feel a little gritty and your tears might be a little stained - you will be given full instructions about what to expect and what to do if you have problems.
- You will have an eye shield to protect your eye until we see you again in the clinic the next day, when we will give you further instructions about how to care for your eye.

Check-ups and changing your glasses:

- You will be advised about the need for a follow up appointment after your operation.
- Most people take the first week off work/study. For the first few weeks after the operation, you can resume normal activities as long as you are careful.
- You will need to have your glasses changed, usually four to six weeks after surgery; you will need to visit your optician for this.

Serious or frequently occurring risks

- All operations carry some risks.
- There are many complications (problems) that can happen after a cataract operation, however, the vast majority of people have successful surgery.
- When you come to your assessment clinic, we will give you a consent form that has all the common risks. These are also available on the Addenbrooke's website (see below). We want you to be informed about your choices to help you to be fully involved in making any decisions.

We hope you have found this information helpful.

If you have any questions or worries, please feel free to speak to a member of our staff or contact the **Cataract Clinic Tel: 01223 216 711**.

Further information can also be obtained from the following organisations and websites:

- **Addenbrooke's Hospital website:** www.addenbrookes.org.uk
- look for 'consent forms' on the home page.
- **Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)**, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1W 5AA; Tel: 0845 766 99 99
www.rnib.org.uk/info/cataract.htm.
- **The Royal College of Ophthalmologists**, 17 Cornwall Terrace, London NW1 4QW; Tel: 020 7935 0702
www.rcophth.ac.uk/genpublic.html