

# CATARACT SURGERY

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WHAT TO EXPECT



**EYE CONSULTANTS  
OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA, PC**  
Adult/Pediatric Ophthalmology

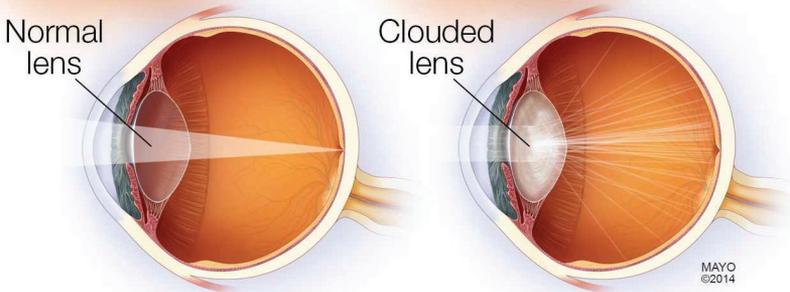
# CATARACT SURGERY

Thank you for choosing Eye Consultants of Northern Virginia (ECNV) for your cataract surgery. We strive to provide all the essential information required so that you can make an informed decision regarding surgery and the lens implant that best suits your lifestyle needs.

## WHAT IS A CATARACT?

Normal

Eye with cataract



A cataract is a clouding of the natural lens of the eye. The natural lens is solid and round with a clear covering like a piece of plastic wrap. Light enters the eye and is focused through the front structures (cornea and lens) onto the retina, which is the seeing tissue lining the back of the eye. The natural lens can become cloudy causing blurring, glare or halos around lights. *The change of the lens from clear to cloudy is a cataract.* The first treatment for a cataract is a change

in glasses. When glasses are no longer able to provide adequate vision for your daily activities such as driving, reading or watching television, the cataract can be surgically removed and replaced with an artificial lens called an intraocular lens implant (IOL).

## YOUR CATARACT SURGERY EXPERIENCE:

### Where is surgery performed?

Cataract surgery is performed at an outpatient surgical center. We use two surgical centers located in Fairfax County:

- Fairfax Surgical Center  
10730 Main Street, Fairfax, VA 22030
- Northern Virginia Eye Surgery Center  
2710 Prosperity Avenue #150, Fairfax, VA 22031



Your total time at the surgical center on the day of surgery is about 2 ½ - 3 hours. The surgical coordinator and surgical center will advise you of the arrival time for your surgery.

***You will need someone to drive you to and from the surgery center on the day of surgery. You cannot drive yourself home. Your ride must remain present for your entire procedure.***

In many cases, you can drive the day after surgery. Most patients can return to work one to two days following surgery, unless you work in an area where

you are exposed to dust, dirt or fumes. In that case, you should be off from work for one week.

## What do I have to do to prepare for surgery?

We want you to have the best surgical experience and outcome, so make sure you follow all of the pre- and post-operative instructions, and read all materials thoroughly and well in advance of your surgery. You will receive a surgical folder about one month prior to surgery with a list of items to be completed prior to surgery. Below is a summary of these items:



After your cataract evaluation with the doctor, our surgical coordinator will call you to schedule the cataract surgery. At that time, an additional pre-operative appointment for surgical measurements may be scheduled. Once scheduled for surgery, you will receive a surgical folder with confirmation dates and additional information about your surgery.



On the day of your measurements, a post-operative supply kit is given. The cost of the kit is \$25 and contains sunglasses, temporary over-the-counter reading glasses, an eye shield and tape for use after the surgery. You can use one kit for both eyes.



Within 30 days **prior** to surgery, you need to see your primary doctor for a medical clearance. You should schedule this appointment as soon as you know your surgical date(s) so there is plenty of time to get your clearance for surgery. In your surgical folder, you will find a letter to your doctor and a medical clearance form. Be sure to take both of these to your doctor. Please have your doctor FAX the clearance form and your lab results to the surgical center AND to our office when completed.

- Approximately 2 weeks before surgery, our office will send your eye drop prescriptions electronically to your pharmacy. **Be sure to pick up your prescriptions and start your medications as directed three days before surgery!** Continue using the drops after surgery as instructed on the surgical drops sheet provided to you.
- Prior to surgery, you should continue using all your regular medications. **There is NO need to stop any medication including aspirin, Plavix, Coumadin or Flomax.** On the day of surgery, take your regular morning medications with small sips of water unless you have been advised to defer them. **If you take insulin or any oral hypoglycemic medication, be sure to follow your medical doctor's instructions for them on the day of surgery.**
- Here is what you need to remember on the day of surgery: **First, do not have anything to eat or drink after midnight if your surgery is in the morning.** If your surgery is in the afternoon, the surgical center will advise you when to discontinue eating and drinking.



**IMPORTANT! Take your surgical kit with the sunglasses and all three of your eye drops with you to the surgical center on the day of surgery, and give them to your doctor. Your doctor will use the drops after your surgery and will return the kit to you.**



## **What Happens During & After The Surgery?**

At the surgical center, you will receive an IV and pre-operative drops to prepare you for surgery. Your eye will be numbed with a topical (eyedrop) anesthetic and you will be given a twilight sedative so that you are very relaxed for the procedure. You will be directed to focus on a fixation light, during which time you will see a colored light show while the surgeon performs the surgery.

The surgery takes 12 to 15 minutes and there is usually no stitching or patching of the eye.

You will be able to see when you leave the operating room although the vision will be blurry and hazy. Your pupil will be dilated and you will wear sunglasses to reduce glare when you leave the surgical center. You cannot drive the day of surgery but you may drive the day after surgery if you feel the vision is adequate.

You will come back for a post-operative visit at one of our offices within 1-2 days after surgery and 2-4 weeks later. You will be using eye drops according to the instructions for one month after surgery unless otherwise directed by your surgeon.

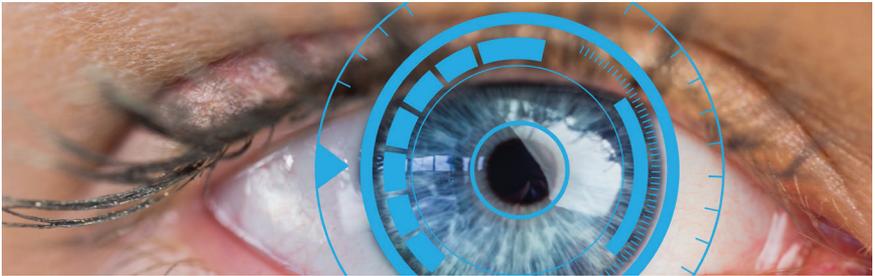
## **What is the success rate and risk of cataract surgery?**

In most cases, the surgery has a 99% success rate. Ninety-nine out of 100 patients have recovery of their vision with no complications. There is a 1% complication rate which can include many things - bleeding in the eye at the time of surgery, retinal detachment, infection, dropping a piece of lens material in the back of the eye and drooping of the eyelid. Fortunately, complications occur very infrequently. There is a small

but real risk of an unsuccessful outcome.

At the time of surgery, the cataract is removed and a new IOL is put in its place. The membrane surrounding the cataract is called the lens capsule. It is left intact to support the new IOL. Months or years after surgery, this lens capsule can develop a haziness that causes blurring, glare and halos or a decrease in vision. This is NOT a complication of cataract surgery. It occurs in approximately 50% of patients and can be treated in the office using the YAG laser. The laser treatment is a painless procedure and takes just a few minutes. The YAG laser treatment is a covered benefit for most insurance plans.

## WHAT ARE MY INTRAOCULAR LENS (IOL) OPTIONS:



There are various lens options that can be implanted at the time of cataract surgery. A standard monofocal IOL is a single focus lens and generally improves the vision in the distance (far away). All patients will need glasses for reading and computer while some may need bifocals or progressive glasses to correct astigmatism or residual refractive error. This lens is a covered benefit for most insurance companies.

We also offer custom cataract surgery utilizing advanced technology IOL's and laser cataract surgery

to decrease glasses dependence after surgery. These advanced options can customize your vision based on your lifestyle needs and are not covered services. You would be responsible for the costs of the non-covered services if you choose any of these options. The out-of-pocket patient expense for each advanced technology intraocular lens or advanced refractive option is listed in the sections below.

***After completion of your examination, the doctor will advise you which options would be available and recommended for you.***

## **OPTIONS TO IMPROVE DISTANCE VISION**

### **Monofocal intraocular lens (Standard IOL)**

This implant is a single focus lens, which means it focuses your vision at one distance. Most often, the implant power is selected to give the best vision for far away. It is necessary to use glasses for reading, computer and other close activities. Some patients with astigmatism, nearsightedness or farsightedness after surgery may need bifocals or progressive glasses to improve both distance and near vision. All patients are candidates for this lens.

There is no extra charge for this lens.

## **OPTIONS TO IMPROVE DISTANCE VISION WHEN YOU HAVE ASTIGMATISM**

Astigmatism is when the cornea is oval instead of round and has to be corrected to improve the vision.

## **Toric Intraocular Lens (Toric IOL)**

This IOL has correction for astigmatism built into the lens, making the patient more independent of glasses for seeing in the distance (far away). It is also a single focus implant; therefore, glasses are required for reading and for other near focusing activities. The extra cost of a Toric IOL is approximately \$1500 per eye.

## **Femtosecond Laser Assisted Cataract Surgery**

Femtosecond Laser performs several steps of cataract surgery and can treat smaller amounts of corneal astigmatism. This improves uncorrected distance vision and decreases dependence on glasses after surgery by reducing astigmatism. Glasses are required for reading and other near activities after surgery.

The extra cost of laser assisted cataract surgery is approximately \$1400 per eye.

## **OPTIONS TO IMPROVE DISTANCE AND NEAR VISION**

### **Multifocal Intraocular Lenses**

Multifocal intraocular lenses have correction for distance and near built into the same lens. A portion of the lens brings distance light rays into focus and a portion of the lens brings near light rays into focus. Among multifocal intraocular lenses, some are better suited for distance-dominant activities and others for near-dominant activities. Your doctor will help you decide which lens best suits your visual needs. Multifocal lenses may be associated with mild halos and glare at night in a small group of patients. These lenses can also be used in patients who have corneal astigmatism.

*The extra cost of a multifocal intraocular lens is approximately \$2400 per eye.*

### **Monovision Option**

Monovision is when the dominant eye is focused for distance and the non-dominant eye is focused for closer activities. Using both eyes, you can see many activities without glasses. Monovision can be achieved with cataract surgery by implanting a lens for distance in one eye and a lens for closer activities in the other eye.

There are limitations to monovision and glasses may be required for some functions for both distance and near. In addition, if the patient has astigmatism, then astigmatism correction with a Toric IOL or laser is recommended.

The cost for Monovision is approximately \$925 extra (one charge for two eyes).

***Thank you for choosing ECNV for your eye care needs!***



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