



CATARACTS:

WHAT THEY ARE

AND HOW TO TREAT THEM



Cataract surgery is one of the most common eye surgeries performed at Iowa City Ambulatory Surgical Center. We perform over 2,000 cataract surgeries a year.

Your eye functions just like a camera functions in taking a picture. Like a camera, your eye has a lens. The job of this lens is to focus the images in the eye. This lens should be clear, just like a camera lens should be clear without any smudges.

However, the lens in your eye can become cloudy from a variety of causes. When this cloudy lens occurs inside the eye we call it a “cataract”. As the lens becomes cloudy, it will prevent light from passing through the eye and therefore results in blurred and decreased vision. As this process continues and the cataract expands, your vision becomes progressively worse with time.

HALF OF ALL AMERICANS WILL EXPERIENCE CATARACTS BY THE TIME THEY ARE 75 YEARS OLD.

Three Most Common Types of Cataracts

Nuclear Cataracts: This is the most common type of cataract. This cataract forms over the center nucleus of the eye. It takes a number of years for this type of cataract to develop, and therefore it is the most common type of cataract as we get older. Most people in their 50's and 60's have the start of a nuclear cataract. As a nuclear cataract develops, your eye's lens moves from a nice, clear color to yellow—eventually to brown, completely obstructing your vision if left untreated.

Cortical Cataracts: This cataract starts at the outer rim of the lens and grows inward toward the central core. A cortical cataract resembles spokes of a wheel. Glare is the most common issue for patients with cortical cataracts, with night driving and bright sunny days creating very bothersome visual symptoms.

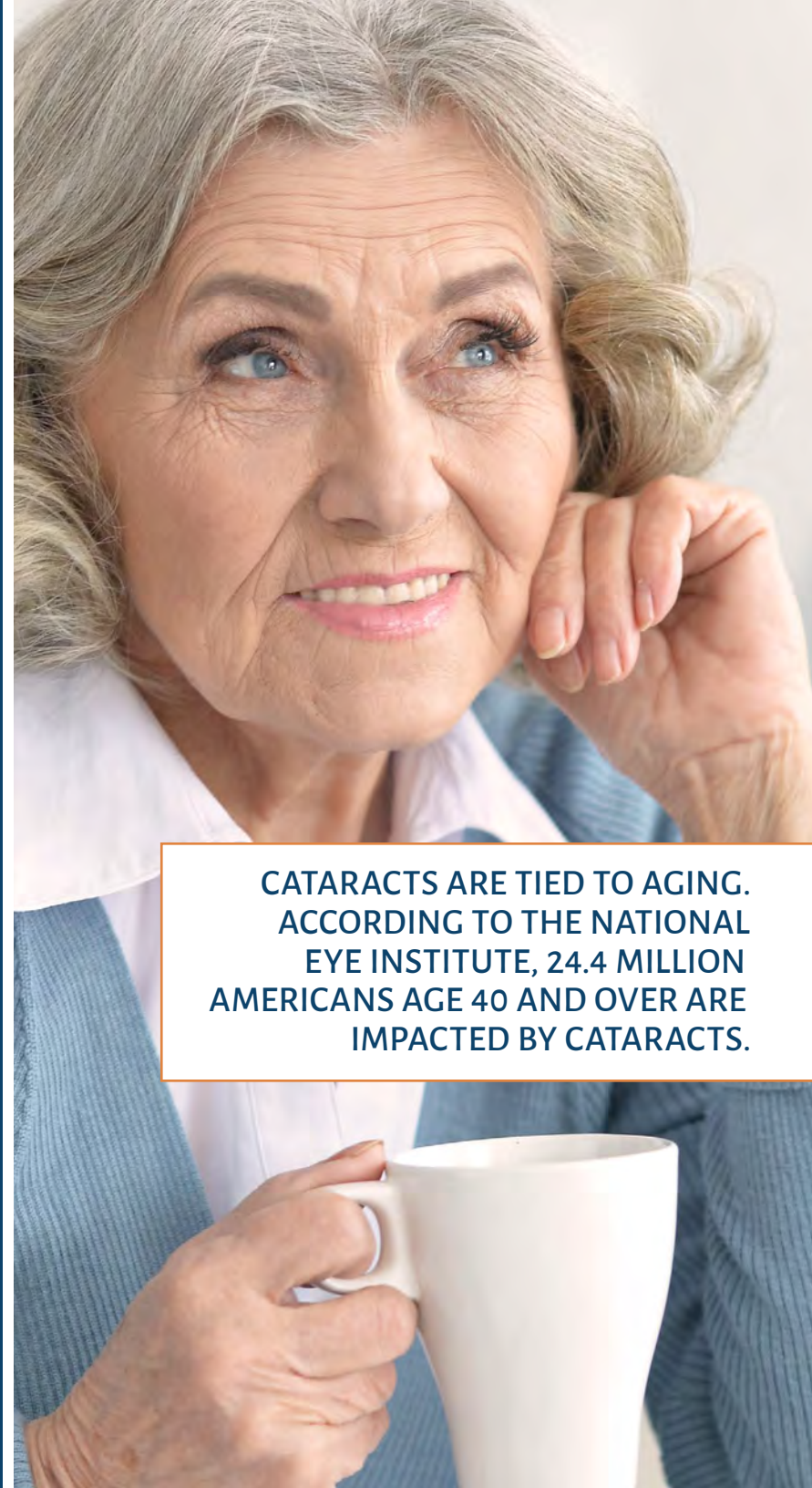
Subcapsular Cataracts: This type of cataract progresses the quickest of all the types of cataracts. Subcapsular cataract can advance in a matter of months and develop as an opacification in the back part of the lens. Blurry vision and glare can develop very suddenly in patients who have subcapsular cataracts. This form of cataract is most commonly found in patients with diabetes, patients who are extremely nearsighted, and patients who are taking different forms of steroid medication.

Who Is At Risk?

Most cataracts are tied to aging. Cataracts appear in over 22 million Americans over the age of 40.

Other risks are attributed to the environment in which you live.

Your lifestyle and medications can also contribute to cataracts.



**CATARACTS ARE TIED TO AGING.
ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL
EYE INSTITUTE, 24.4 MILLION
AMERICANS AGE 40 AND OVER ARE
IMPACTED BY CATARACTS.**



Can Cataracts be Prevented?

Doctors and researchers have not been able to link cataracts prevention to specific behaviors. However, most providers believe that there are some health-conscious habits you can adopt that may help prevent or slow the development of this condition. Some of the most commonly recommended steps include the following:

Make sure you get your annual eye exam. Early detection can help prevent damage to the lens.

Limit your use of tobacco and alcohol. This is good health advice generally, but it's especially true when it comes to your eye health.

Manage your other health problems. Your eyes are often sensitive to health conditions throughout your body. Ensuring any health issues, such as diabetes, are properly managed can preserve your eye health.

Protect your eyes. When possible, wear sunglasses to prevent UV radiation from interacting with your eyes.

Eat a healthy diet. Plenty of people who have a healthy lifestyle develop cataracts. But, in general, a balanced diet and exercise can help you recover faster from disease and treatment.

Above all, the best thing you can do to prevent cataracts is to see your eye doctor regularly.

What are the Symptoms of Cataracts?

Cataracts requires a medical diagnosis, but there are signs, presentations, and symptoms you can watch out for. See your provider if you experience the following symptoms:

- Obstruction, cloudiness, or blurring of your vision.
- Difficulty seeing at night (for example, night driving becomes much more challenging).
- Double vision in one eye (or both eyes).
- Seeing halos or other artifacts around lights.
- Becoming more sensitive to glare from lights.
- Requiring stronger or brighter lights for everyday activities, such as reading.

These symptoms may be subtle at first. But as the cataract grows and further distorts your vision, these symptoms can become more pronounced and noticeable. If you notice any of these symptoms, it's important to see your eye doctor to receive a diagnosis and discuss treatment options.





What Happens During Cataract Surgery?

During cataracts surgery, the distorted lens is removed from your eye and replaced by a new, clear lens. This artificial lens becomes a new, functioning, and permanent addition to your eye—so you typically never have to worry about cataracts in that eye again.

Cataracts surgery requires only a very small incision, so this procedure is usually performed on an outpatient basis. Often, cataracts surgery can be performed at an ambulatory surgery center. The Iowa City Ambulatory Surgery Center, for example, performs over 2000 such surgeries every year.

For most patients, Cataracts surgery is performed under local anesthesia and no discomfort is involved. Once surgery is complete, healing will usually take 1-2 weeks. While cataracts surgery is a minor procedure, it's still surgery, so make sure you talk to your doctor about the possible risks.

Once surgery is complete and your eye has finished healing, you will notice crisper, clearer vision. Some patients may even be able to correct nearsightedness or farsightedness. Your new lens will let in more light—so you'll be surprised by just how bright the world is after surgery!

Are There Non-Surgical Cataracts Solutions?

The answer to this is both yes and no. In some cases, typical corrective lenses may be able to address your cataracts-caused vision deficiencies. If your vision is blurry, for example, glasses may be able to help.

Who is a Good Candidate for Cataracts Surgery?

But if your cataracts progress to the point where your glasses are no longer offering the resolution you need, then cataracts surgery is the only solution for your symptoms.

Cataracts surgery isn't for everyone, and there are some vision impairments that mean you will not be a good candidate for surgery. But it's also important to note that there's no rush to surgery—cataracts don't harm your eyes. So make sure to take your time and talk to your doctor about your options.





Cataract Surgery at Iowa City Ambulatory Surgical Center has made great strides with the help of technology. According to Dr. Christopher Watts, an Ophthalmologist at Iowa City Ambulatory Surgical Center, "The technology which allows us to remove the cataract continues to improve. Our incisions have decreased in size and are now just 2 millimeters. Patients have much quicker recovery, more comfortable surgeries, and better visual outcomes than previous generations of cataract surgery patients. We are getting modified interfaces which allow us to optimize patient vision with less dependence on glasses after surgery as well, leading to many happy patients after surgery."

After patients have surgery at Iowa City Ambulatory Surgical Center, we advise them to take it easy for the first week. Even though cataract surgery is not a terribly invasive procedure and patients generally feel very good right after it is over, it is still surgery. Avoiding strenuous activity for a week after surgery, using the drops as instructed, and communicating with our surgeons helps us maximize your visual outcome and lead to a successful recovery.

"We have many options, both surgically and medically, to treat and prevent these conditions. As with everything, earlier detection leads to better outcomes. Regular eye checks can allow physicians and patients to intervene very early and preserve their eyesight"

"A common trend we see among patients is that they don't consider their eye health until they are faced with very late and advanced stages of cataract, or something worse like macular degeneration or glaucoma. Patients understandably become nervous when they first hear they have one of these conditions. However, we are very fortunate to have great medical care in this country with great options for treatment and intervention."

— Dr. Christopher Watts.

"The care I experienced at Iowa City Ambulatory Surgical Center was excellent. Everyone was friendly, nice and made my experience convenient...I would suggest to others that they consider Iowa City Ambulatory Surgical Center for their operation. It's all around a better experience whether it's cataract surgery or any other procedure you can have."

— Dr. Don Merryman, Cataract Surgery Patient

At Iowa City Ambulatory Surgical Center, our surgeons and staff are committed to each and every one of our patients' treatment and recovery. Their quality of care and positive experience are our highest priority. We are a multi-specialty facility that performs over 2,000 cataract surgeries per year and approximately 7,000 total surgeries a year.

At Iowa City Ambulatory Surgical Center, our team of ophthalmologists cares about our patients and want to restore their vision with the latest technology and techniques. ***To learn more, or schedule your appointment with our facility, please visit our site at iowacityasc.com or call us at (319) 248-1500.***



A multi-specialty surgical center.

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