

## Cataract Surgery: Most Frequently Asked Questions

### **What are cataracts?**

A cataract is a progressive clouding of the eye's natural lens that interferes with light passing through to the retina. People who suffer from cataracts usually describe the condition as being similar to looking through a waterfall, or a piece of wax paper, with a gradual blurring or distortion of vision. Cataract sufferers may also experience glare, halos around lights, or even double vision. Also, as the cataract becomes worse, frequent changes in eyeglass prescriptions may become necessary.

### **Are there any ways to prevent cataracts?**

Currently, there is no medical treatment to reverse or prevent the development of cataracts. Once they form, there is only one way to achieve clear vision again, and that is to physically remove the cataract or cloudy lens inside the eye and replace it with an artificial intraocular lens (IOL).

### **What should I know about the exam before my cataract surgery?**

Please plan on spending approximately two hours with us for your cataract exam and important testing. Your eyes will be dilated and a complete ocular health evaluation will be conducted. Dilation can cause your eyes to be sensitive to light, so we recommend you bring a pair of dark sunglasses to wear after your exam. If you currently wear hard contact lenses (gas permeable), it is important to have them out for at least three weeks. If you wear soft contact lenses, please refrain from wearing these for at least one week.

### **What are the types of cataract procedures?**

#### **Standard Cataract Procedure**

In most cases, the cataract is extracted through a tiny 2-2.5mm incision and an advanced biocompatible monofocal IOL is inserted to replace the cloudy natural lens. Standard IOLs have UVA/UVB protection built into the lenses to continue protecting your retina after surgery. With standard cataract surgery, a monofocal lens allows for improved vision at a predetermined distance, usually distance vision. These implants give patients good distance vision but reading or bifocal glasses will most likely be needed for near vision. You may need to wear glasses for distance if you have astigmatism.

#### **Custom Cataract Procedure**

For a patient who would like to be less dependent on glasses, we have Custom Cataract surgery options available. Specifically, Custom Cataract surgery addresses presbyopia and astigmatism. These conditions still remain after standard cataract surgery. Custom Cataract surgery goes beyond standard cataract surgery by also managing astigmatism and/or replacing the cataract with an IOL to reduce your dependence on glasses or bifocals. Insurance and Medicare covers standard cataract surgery, but they do not cover the testing, IOLs or options used in Custom Cataract surgery.

### **What are Premium or Advanced Technology Lenses (IOLs)?**

During cataract surgery, your ophthalmologist can not only remove the cataract, but also improve vision impairment issues caused by presbyopia and astigmatism by using either a Toric or multifocal IOL. Presbyopia is a condition most people over the age of 40 experience that results in difficulty seeing up close without the aid of bifocals, trifocals, or reading glasses. This age-related condition is believed to be caused by a hardening of the lens inside the eye, making it difficult for the eye muscles to focus. This can be corrected during Custom Cataract Surgery using a multifocal or presbyopic-correcting IOL. Another type of premium lens available is a Toric (monofocal) IOL, that can correct astigmatism. Astigmatism is caused by the cornea being shaped more like a football than a basketball, which results in images focusing at different points in the retina. As everyone's eyes vary, you will need to meet with your ophthalmologist to determine if one of these premium lenses can help reduce or eliminate your dependency on glasses after your cataract surgery.

### **What is the LenSx® Custom Cataract Laser?**

With the introduction of the first FDA cleared Custom Cataract Laser, the LenSx® femtosecond cataract laser, surgeons at The Eye Institute of Utah now have the ability to create incisions and reduce astigmatism with a laser. These incisions are more accurate and precise, thus eliminating some of the variables that have complicated cataract surgery results in the past. Recent results show that the laser is up to 10x more precise<sup>1</sup> than manual techniques for portions of the cataract surgical procedure. By being more accurate and precise, visual outcomes are more predictable.<sup>2</sup>

### **Does cataract surgery hurt?**

In most cases, a mild sedative such as valium is given to help relax you. Eye drops to numb the eye are also administered before surgery to make the procedure more comfortable for you.

### **Where is the cataract surgery performed?**

The majority of cataract surgeries are performed at The SurgiCare Center on the 2nd floor at The Eye Institute of Utah. If a patient's insurance is out-of-network, our surgeons also have the ability to utilize other facilities.

### **Who performs the procedure?**

All surgeries at The Eye Institute of Utah are performed by highly experienced, board-certified ophthalmologists. Although there are other surgical technicians and nurses in the surgical suite to assist, you can be assured your surgeon will be performing the surgery.

### **I have cataracts in both eyes. Can they be treated on the same day?**

No. Surgery on each eye is performed on separate days, but often within a week or two of each other.

### **How long does cataract surgery take? How long will I be at the surgery center?**

While the cataract procedure itself only takes 10-20 minutes, you should plan on being at the surgical facility for several hours to accommodate for admission, a short pre-op, physical and time to dilate our eyes. After your procedure, post-operative instructions will be reviewed with you and the responsible adult who accompanied you. You will be required to bring someone with you who can drive you home after surgery.

### **How will my eye feel and what will my vision be like right after surgery?**

Your eye may feel scratchy, watery, and irritated after surgery. Your vision may also be a little blurry. These symptoms will gradually improve over the next 24-48 hours. It may take several weeks for your vision to stabilize as your eye continues to heal.

### **How long until I can resume normal activities?**

Following cataract surgery, patients are told to rest the remainder of the day. Patients should have someone drive them home. Many patients can return to work and usual activities within a few days.

### **How soon will I be able to drive?**

Most patients can resume driving within the next few days.

### **Will I need glasses after surgery?**

If you choose to have standard cataract surgery which corrects your distance vision, patients may still require glasses or bifocals for most activities. However, Toric, multifocal or presbyopia-correcting IOLs improve the chances of being less dependent on glasses. If you have a desire to be less dependent on glasses, talk to your doctor about these custom cataract lenses.

### **Can my cataract return?**

The cataract cannot come back once it is removed. The capsule that is left behind to hold the implant can become cloudy over time leading to what is referred to as a secondary cataract or posterior capsular opacification (PCO). This is treated using a YAG laser and is a painless procedure that only takes a few minutes. This procedure is not included with your cataract surgery and is typically billable to insurance.

### **Will the implant ever need to be replaced?**

In the majority of cases, the implant will never need to be removed or replaced. However, certain conditions may warrant an IOL exchange. These conditions are rare.

### **How much does cataract surgery cost?**

Most insurance companies cover a portion of the cost of standard cataract surgery. We will bill your insurance, but it's the patient's responsibility to pay deductibles, co-pays, coinsurance and any remaining amount that insurance does not cover. It is the patient's responsibility to contact their insurance company and know their deductibles, surgery co-pay and covered benefits. If you upgrade to a custom cataract surgery, those additional costs are not covered by insurance and are due on the day of surgery.

*Should you have additional questions, please call **801-266-2283** or **800-987-EYES** to speak with a representative or visit our website at **[www.theeyeinstitute.com](http://www.theeyeinstitute.com)***