

# Cataract surgery

Department of Ophthalmology

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: January 2026

Updated: March 2026

Next review: January 2029

Leaflet number: 1065 Version: 3.1

## Introduction

This leaflet will give you information about cataract surgery. It will answer any questions you may have.

## Why do I need cataract surgery?

A cataract is when the clear part inside your eye (called the lens) becomes cloudy. This makes it harder for you to see clearly. It happens to most people as they get older.

When the cataract blocks your vision too much, the only treatment option is cataract surgery. In cataract surgery we remove the cloudy lens. We replace it with a clear artificial lens implant.

## What causes cataracts?

Most cataracts are caused naturally because of aging. However, there are other factors that may increase your risk of getting it like:

- diabetes
- eye injury
- having an eye surgery before
- long term use of medications (steroids)

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or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net](mailto:uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net)

## **What are the symptoms?**

You get a cataract slowly over many years. This means you may not notice symptoms at first. Symptoms of cataracts are:

- blurred, misty or clouded vision
- many changes in eyeglass or contact lens prescription
- double vision
- sensitivity to light (lights look too bright or glaring)
- problems driving at night

## **How are cataracts treated?**

If your cataracts are not too bad, we may change your prescription. We suggest using brighter reading lights to help you see. However, your cataracts will slowly get worse over time. You will need treatment. The only way to treat cataracts is through cataract surgery. We recommend this if your loss of vision is affecting your daily activities like driving and reading.

In the surgery we remove the cloudy lens and replace it with a clear artificial lens called an intraocular lens (IOL). This lens will stay in your eye for the rest of your life.

## **What are the benefits of cataract surgery?**

Cataract surgery can:

- make your vision much clearer.
- help you to stop using glasses for looking at things far away.
- fix other problems with your vision like astigmatism, short and long sightedness.
- help improve other eye conditions like glaucoma.

**If you want to have this surgery we will see you at a Pre Operative Assessment Clinic.**

## **Before your surgery**

### **What happens at a Pre Operative Assessment Clinic?**

A nurse will assess you to check if you are fit to have this procedure. Please make sure you bring the names of the medicines you are taking.

Depending on which anaesthetic type you will have, we may need to:

- do a blood test
- do an Electrocardiogram (heart tracing)

We may ask you to see your GP for your blood pressure (BP) or diabetes if you have these conditions.

We will take measurements of your eye (biometry) for the replacement lens.

## **On the day of surgery**

Please follow the instructions on your letter telling you what time to arrive, what you can eat and drink and the medicines you can take. Please wear loose comfortable clothes.

1. When you arrive a member of staff will take you through to the admissions room. Here we will need to fill in some paperwork to get you ready for your surgery.
2. We will give you eye drops which will make your pupils bigger (dilate).
3. The surgical team will then see you. We may ask you to sign a consent form if you have not already signed one.
4. We will mark the eye that is having surgery. You will stay in the room until after your surgery is finished. You could be with us for up to half a day. Please make your family/friend/carers know this.
5. We will take you to the anaesthetic room when it is time for your surgery. We will give local or general anaesthesia. Your doctor or nurse will talk to you about the anaesthetic options before the day of your surgery. Most patients have their cataract surgery under local anaesthetic. With a local anaesthetic, you will be awake for the surgery but your eye will be numb. You will not feel any pain.
6. While you are lying down on the table the surgeon will clean your face with antiseptic. They will place a drape over your face. You will then see a bright light from the microscope.

7. When the surgeon starts the procedure you might feel some water trickling down on the side of your face. You might hear some noise from the machines in the room.
8. The procedure will take about 20 to 40 minutes. You must stay still during this time.
9. When the surgery is over the surgeon will clean your face. We will then take you into the recovery room. We may move you into a chair.
10. The time you spend in the recovery room depends on the type of anaesthetic you have. We will take you to the ward from the recovery room. You can have light refreshments here.
11. The staff on the ward will give you instructions on what to do after the surgery, before you go home.

## **What are the risks of cataract surgery?**

In most cases, cataract surgery is successful. There is a small risk of complications that can happen during or after the surgery.

Only about 3% of people who have cataracts have complications. The most common complications can be dealt with and often does not affect sight in the long term.

The most common complications is thickening of the lens capsule. This is what holds the lens in place. This can happen a couple of months or even years after the surgery. Your sight will become cloudy again as if the cataract has come back. Doctors call this complication posterior capsule thickening/ opacification. You will need a small laser surgery to fix this. This will be as an outpatient appointment.

### **More serious complications that are rarer:**

- retina pulling away from the back of the eye (retinal detachment)
- a break in the lens capsule
- infection
- problems with the lens implant and its position

These complications are much rarer and treatments are available. The clinician will talk to you about any risks.



## What if my surgery gets cancelled?

Most surgeries go ahead as planned. However, very rarely surgeries can be cancelled on the day of the procedure. The common reasons are:

- an emergency patient, they take priority
- a patient has developed another unexpected medical problem
- the patient has not followed instructions on how to prepare for the surgery

## Contact details

If you have any questions or concerns about your surgery that cannot wait until the day of your surgery or your health has changed since your pre operative assessment then please call us on **0116 258 6248** or **0116 258 6246** and ask to speak to one of our nurses.

If you think you may have any problems with your eyes, you should contact the **Eye Casualty Department on 0116 258 6273** or go to **Eye Casualty** at:

The Windsor Eye Clinic,

Level 1, Windsor Building,

Leicester Royal Infirmary:

Opening times: Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm

Saturday and Sunday, 8.30am to 12.30pm

If your problem happens outside of these hours and you feel that it is urgent, you should go to the main Adult Emergency Department at Leicester Royal Infirmary.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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