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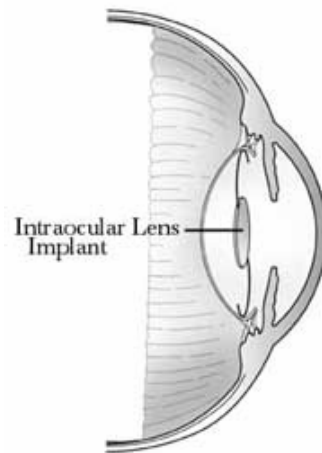
CATARACT EXTRACTION WITH INTRAOCULAR LENS IMPLANTATION

What is a cataract extraction with intraocular lens implantation?

A cataract extraction with intraocular lens implantation is a procedure in which an eye surgeon removes a clouded lens (cataract) from the eye and replaces it with an artificial lens (lens implant).

When is it used?

Cataracts can cause vision problems by preventing clear images from reaching the retina (the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye). You may choose to have cataract surgery because you need to have better vision to continue your normal activities. In the early stages of cataracts, an alternative to surgery may be to change your glasses.



How do I prepare for the procedure?

Plan for your care and recovery after the operation, especially if you are to have general anesthesia. Allow for time to rest and try to find people to help you with your day-to-day activities. Follow instructions provided by your doctor. Eat a light meal, such as soup or salad, the night before the procedure. Your doctor will probably also recommend that you not eat or drink anything after midnight or the morning before the procedure. Do not even drink coffee, tea, or water. Do not wear eye makeup on the day of the surgery. Also, tell your doctor about any kind of medications you are taking. Ask your doctor if it is okay for you to take your medications the day of surgery.

What happens during the procedure?

You will be given a local or general anesthetic to prevent pain during the operation. A local anesthetic numbs your eye while you remain awake. A general anesthetic relaxes your muscles and puts you to sleep. Most surgery is done with local anesthesia only. Sometimes the doctor will give you a sedative to help you relax. The surgeon will make a small cut in your eye and remove the cloudy lens. The surgeon will remove the lens by either:

- Nuclear expression: A procedure in which the lens is removed in one piece.
- Phacoemulsification: A procedure in which sound waves (ultrasound) are used to break the lens into small pieces. The small pieces are then removed through a narrow hollow tube.

After the lens is removed, the surgeon will put a plastic lens in your eye. The surgeon may put one or more stitches in your eye and then put a patch over the eye.

What happens after the procedure?

You will be in the recovery area after surgery until you are ready to go home. Have someone take you home. It's normal to feel itching, sticky eyelids, and mild discomfort for a while after cataract surgery. Some fluid discharge is also common. If you have discomfort, your doctor may suggest a nonaspirin pain reliever every 4 to 6 hours (aspirin can cause bleeding). After 1 to 2 days, the discomfort should stop.

You will have few limits on your activities after surgery. You can read and watch TV almost right away, but your vision may be blurry at first. You can do simple tasks such as ride in a car, get dressed, cook, and visit friends. Do not rub your eye or allow water or other substances to get into your eye. Avoid bumping or injuring the eye.

Your eye doctor will schedule exams to remove the patch and to check on your progress. You may need to use eyedrops to help healing or to prevent infection or inflammation. For a few days after surgery, you may also use eyedrops or take pills to control the pressure in your eye. Ask your doctor how and when to use the drops or pills and what effects they can have. In most cases, it takes about 6 weeks for the eye to heal. You will be ready for new glasses in about 1 month. It may take a few more weeks for the sharpest vision to return.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

You can regain nearly normal vision if the rest of your eye is normal.

What are the risks of this procedure?

The risks of this procedure include:

- infection
- bleeding
- inflammation (pain, redness, swelling)
- glaucoma (higher pressure inside your eye)
- retinal detachment
- need for additional surgery
- loss of vision (rare).

There are some risks when you have general anesthesia. Discuss these risks with your doctor. A local anesthetic may not numb the area quite enough and you may feel some minor discomfort. Also, in rare cases you may have an allergic reaction to the drug used in this type of anesthesia. Local anesthesia is considered safer than general anesthesia and is used for most cataract surgeries.

You may develop an after-cataract. When this happens, the back part of the capsule that enclosed your lens becomes cloudy and blurs the image reaching the retina at the back of

your eye. The after-cataract can be treated with a laser. In a procedure called YAG capsulotomy, your doctor uses a laser beam to make a tiny hole in the clouded capsule so a clear image can reach the back of the eye. This is a painless outpatient procedure with low risk. Ask your doctor how these risks apply to you.

EYE CARE AFTER CATARACT SURGERY

What should I do right after cataract surgery?

Plan to spend the day resting quietly when you return home after surgery. For a day or two, avoid exerting yourself, and do not carry anything heavy or bend over. Your vision will be blurry at first, so be extra careful to avoid falling or bumping your head. If you feel like it, you can read, watch TV, and do simple chores. You can resume your normal diet and take your usual medications unless your doctor tells you otherwise.

What things can I safely do the next day?

You can do most things you feel like doing, including walking for exercise and stretching.

If you work at a desk in an office, you can return to work. If you do any strenuous work, ask your doctor when you can return to work.

What things should I avoid?

- Do not drive until your doctor says you can.
- Do not strain yourself until your incisions heal. Ask your doctor when you can return to strenuous exercise.
- Do not get dirt, water, soap, or other substances in your eye. Do not swim in a public pool or hot tub. Ask your doctor when it is safe to get water in your eye.

How well can I expect to see after surgery?

Expect your vision to be blurry at first. Also, your vision may change from time to time during the day. Your vision will improve over several weeks as your eyes adjust to working together. Your rate of healing may be faster or slower than that of others.

How can I protect my eye?

While your eye is healing, wear your old glasses, sunglasses, or an eye shield at all times, even during naps. Your old glasses will not help you see better in the operated eye, but they will protect your eye from injury. Your doctor will tell you when you are ready for new glasses, usually about 1 month after surgery.

Wear an eye shield when you sleep. Put one strip of tape diagonally across the shield before you put it over your eye. Then put the shield in place and apply the second strip of

tape from your forehead to your cheek. Use the shield at night and during naps until your doctor tells you to stop using it.

Will I need to use medications?

You will be given eyedrops or ointment to help healing or prevent infection or inflammation. Follow your doctor's instructions carefully. If you need to, ask a family member or friend to help put the medicine in your eye. For mild pain or discomfort, you may take a nonaspirin pain reliever such as acetaminophen (Tylenol). If you have pain that is not relieved by this medicine, call your doctor.

Will I need to see the doctor after surgery?

You will need to return to your doctor's office the day after surgery. Your doctor will remove the patch and check your eye. You will need another checkup, usually in a few weeks. Keep all of your appointments, even if you feel well and can see well. If you have questions or concerns, be sure to talk to your doctor about them.

When should I call my doctor?

It is normal for your eye to water for a few days after surgery. It may also appear redder than usual, especially under the upper lid. However, you should call your doctor right away if you have any of the following problems:

- You have severe pain.
- Your vision becomes suddenly worse.
- You see flashes of light in your field of vision.
- You notice new floaters in your in your vision.
- You see what appears to be a curtain coming down across your field of vision.

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