

Eye Essentials



EYE HEALTH

Eyes are one of the most important organs in the human body and vision is one of the most wonderful gifts. But often many people neglect the importance of eye care only to regret later on in life. Maintaining good vision and taking care of eyes is a relatively simple task. Today, I would like to educate all my readers regarding the most common eye problems.

What is Cataract?

Everyone must have heard about cataract and also must be having lot of queries for the same. Cataract / Motibindu / Motiyo etc., same thing but different name. Cataract is clouding / opacification of the natural lens that is present in our eyes causing hazy vision and decrease in vision. Natural lens that is present in our eyes since birth is transparent, clear like water and hence light can pass thru' it and fall on retina to give us clear vision. Due to various reasons and most common is ageing, the transparency of the natural lens starts decreasing and it starts becoming more and more opaque. This non transparent lens blocks the light rays and thus causes decrease in vision. This is cataract.

What are the reasons for cataract development?

Ageing is one of the most common causes for cataract. Any person above the age of 50 years can develop cataract. In some people it can occur before and in some it can occur pretty late in the old age.

Other reasons are: eye trauma, eye infection, congenital (since birth), diabetes, excessive smoking, side effects of certain medications, side effect of certain systemic illness etc.

What are symptoms of cataract?

Increasing glare from strong sunlight or bright lights at night

Colored haloes around light sources such as car headlight causing difficulty in night driving

Colors may appear faded or washed out

Blurring of vision, haziness

Difficult to read small prints

Decrease of vision

How is cataract treated?

Surgery is the only treatment. Cataract needs to be removed when it interferes with daily activities and normal lifestyle. Surgery involves removal of cataractous lens and its replacement with an artificial/synthetic clear intraocular lens.

What will happen if cataract is not operated?

If cataract is not operated, it keeps on increasing. It becomes fully opaque and results into total loss of vision in that eye. It can cause glaucoma with resultant damage to the optic nerve and the retina causing irreversible vision loss. By not getting operated for cataract, a completely treatable vision problem is converted into irreversible and permanent visual loss.

How effective is cataract surgery?



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Cataract removal is one of the most common operations performed worldwide. It is also one of the safest and most effective surgeries. In about 95% cases, people who have undergone cataract operation, have better vision after the surgery.

How is cataract removed?

In olden days, entire cataract was removed without lens implantation (Intracapsular technique), which is not done nowadays.

Then came the Extracapsular technique giving larger incision / wound (8-10mm) on the eye with hard lens implantation. Wound is then sutured with 5-8 stitches.

The Extracapsular technique is now modified to Small Incision Cataract Surgery (SICS): Cataract is removed thru' a tunnel incision (5-7mm) and hard lens implanted. Wound is self-sealing requiring no stitches or sometime 1 or 2 stitches.

Most recent technique and most widely practiced is Phacoemulsification. In this method, 2-3mm corneal incision is made, thru' which cataract is emulsified (broken into small pieces) and aspirated using phaco probe. Foldable lens is then inserted thru' the same incision. No stitches are required.

What are advantages of Phacoemulsification?

- Sutureless surgery
- Faster recovery
- Less trauma to the eyes
- Less astigmatism – better vision
- Discharged within few hours after the surgery.

How long, I have to stay in the hospital?

Most cataract operations are day care surgeries. Patients are discharged within couple of hours after the surgery.

What precautions do I need to take after the operation?

- Avoid rubbing or touching of the eyes
- Glasses during the day time and eye shield at night time to be used
- Do not bend or lift heavy weights
- No head bath for at least 7 days/ bathe from neck downwards
- Avoid strenuous exercise for 1 month
- Avoid eye makeup for 2 months
- Follow doctors' instructions

When will my vision be normal again?

Initial few days vision will be hazy which gradually becomes normal within 10-15 days. Once complete healing occurs, prescription for the new glasses will be given.

What are the complications of cataract surgery?

Cataract surgery has a very high success rate of over 95%.

In spite of the best care and precautions, there is possibility of minor/major complications in few cases:

- Infection



Eye Essentials

- Loss of Corneal clarity
- Loss of vision
- Retinal detachment
- Vitreous loss
- Nucleus drop/ IOL drop
- Hemorrhage.

After the surgery, can I get cataract again?

Cataract does not occur again after the surgery. In majority of the patients, PCO (chari) can develop after 6 months or later which can be permanently treated using Yag laser as an OPD procedure.