Fact Sheet:  
Cataracts and Cataract Surgery

A cataract is a "clouding" of the lens in your eye. The lens, located just behind the iris or the colored part of your eye, works like the lens of a camera. It picks up images, then focuses the lights, colors, and shapes on the retina - the transmitter located at the back of your eye that sends the images to your brain. In a normal eye, light passes through the lens and gets focused on the retina. To help produce a sharp image, the lens must remain clear.

In its early stages, a cataract may not cause a vision problem. The cloudiness may affect only a small part of the lens. Over time, the cataract may grow larger and cloud more of the lens, making it more difficult to see objects clearly.

There are several causes to cataracts, including aging, smoking, diabetes and excessive exposure to sunlight. Cataracts also can develop soon after an eye injury, or even years later. Cataracts cannot be prevented. In over 90 percent of cases, cataracts are caused by the aging process.¹

In the early stages of cataracts, stronger lighting and eyeglasses may lessen vision problems caused by the clouding of the lens. A cataract can be the reason sharp images become blurred, or seeing things at night is more difficult. It may also be why eyeglasses or contact lenses that used to help you see, or do other simple tasks, no longer seem to help.

Once the cataract impacts an individual’s quality of life, surgery may be needed to improve vision. This treatment involves removing the cloudy lens and replacing it with an artificial lens.


- More -
Cataract surgery is one of the safest and most effective types of surgery.² Each year, nearly three million cataract surgeries are performed in the U.S.,³ and globally, 10 million cataract surgeries are performed.⁴ Today, cataract surgery involves removing the cloudy lens and replacing it with an artificial lens, often a monofocal intraocular lens (IOL). A monofocal lens typically provides patients with only one focal point, most commonly far away, leaving patients dependent on glasses for up-close tasks. A new breakthrough technology, AcrySof® ReSTOR® IOL, addresses this by allowing patients to see a full range of vision, near through distance, reducing a patient’s reliance on glasses.

What a cataract is not

A cataract is not a "film" over the eye, and neither diet nor lasers will make it go away. The best way to treat a cataract is to remove the old, clouded lens and provide a replacement.

---

³ Market Scope.