

About Cataracts

- Cataracts are the most common age-related eye condition and the leading cause of preventable blindness in adults 55 and older.¹
- Twenty million Americans in the US age 40 and older have cataracts.²
- Half of all Americans have cataracts—or have had cataract surgery—by age 80.³

DEFINITION:

- A cataract is a cloudy area in the lens of the eye that affects vision. A healthy lens is clear.
- As a cataract develops, the eye's lens gradually becomes hard and cloudy allowing less light to pass through, which makes it more difficult to see.

CAUSES:

- The vast majority of cataracts happen as a result of normal aging.
- Radiation exposure, taking steroids, diabetes, and eye trauma can accelerate the development of cataracts.
- Cataracts can be hereditary and can present shortly after birth.³

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

- Cataracts can develop slowly over many years; some people may not be aware they have them at first. In early stages, a cataract may not cause any vision problems.
- Initially 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.
- Early symptoms include blurriness and needing more and more light to read, even while wearing glasses.
- Other common symptoms include difficulty with glare, halos, double vision, difficulty with distance or near vision, and colors looking faded. If left untreated, cataracts can lead to blindness.⁴
- As they develop and worsen, cataracts may also interfere with the ability to perform basic activities like driving and reading.



TREATMENT:

- Cataracts are treated by removing the eye's cloudy natural lens and replacing it with an artificial intraocular lens (IOL) in a generally safe, streamlined surgical procedure. A small incision is made in the cornea with a hand-held blade or a laser machine. A thin probe breaks up the cataract and removes it. More than 98 percent of cataract surgeries are considered successful and patients can return to their normal routines within 24 hours.⁵
- Each year, 3 million Americans have cataract surgery.⁵ Cataract surgery is one of the most cost-effective health interventions,⁶ resulting in more than 98 percent of the patients undergoing the procedure experiencing improved vision.⁵
- An IOL is a man-made, clear acrylic or plastic lens placed inside the eye. It replaces the natural lens and remains permanently within the eye. The IOL is soft enough to be folded so it can be placed into the eye through a very small incision.
- There are three types of IOLs currently available:
 - **Monofocal IOLs** have one point of focus, either in the distance or close up.
 - **Multifocal IOLs** are more advanced; they provide two or more points of focus and are designed to reduce the dependence on reading glasses.
 - **Toric IOLs** are also advanced lenses and are designed to correct astigmatism, potentially reducing the need for glasses.



Multifocal IOL