

In the Name of God
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Cataract

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What is cataract?

The loss of transparency in the lens of human eyes is scientifically called cataract. This condition generally leads to low vision. As people age, the probability of this disease increases.

Why does cataract arise?

Cataract is probably the result of changes in the body as people age. Our body usually substitutes older cells with new ones. As we get older, this process becomes slower and the number of old cells in the lens of our eyes increases, leading to the blockage of light and blurred vision. As we grow older, other factors such as optic infections, some drugs (like steroids), traumas, exposure to high temperature or radiations, as well as various diseases such as glaucoma and diabetes can give rise to cataract.

Types of cataract:

1. Age-related cataract: About 90% of the incidence of cataract is related to age; it mainly emerges after 40 years of age.
2. Congenital cataract: This type of cataract exists in some newborns at birth. Its usual causes are infections or inflammations during pregnancy.
3. Trauma-induced cataract: The eye lens in this case is damaged as the result of severe traumas, scratches, holes, high temperature, or chemical burns.
4. Secondary cataract: Some drugs, eye diseases, eye infections, or other diseases like diabetes can cause this type of cataract.

How is cataract detected?

Each person experiences cataract in a distinctive way. However, people affected with cataract usually suffer from blurred vision and allergy to light. Some lights might look too dark, some others too bright. The affected person might face problems in reading and driving (especially at night). Also, if you have cataract, you might see halos around lights.

Treatment:

There is no effective medication for this disease. The only decisive treatment is surgery. However, the appropriate time for surgery is determined after doctor's precise examinations.

Post-operative cares:

After cataract surgery, the person undergoing the surgery should:

1. Sleep on his/her back and avoid sleeping on the operated eye's side or on his/her stomach.
2. Stay calm and avoid severe coughing or sneezing.
3. Keep pieces of gauze fixed on his/her eye by an anti-allergy adhesive substance to protect the eye.
4. Keep the protecting gauze on his/her eye 1-3 weeks after surgery especially during sleep, based on doctor's order. During the day, the person should wear sunglasses to avoid damages to the eye since the operated eye is allergic to light.

5. Keep the stitches until the doctor determines whether they should be removed or not based on the recovery of the eye.
6. Let his/her doctor know if the redness or swelling of his/her eye increases. However, the redness of the area around the eye gradually disappears by itself.
7. Let his/her doctor know in cases of having abrupt reduction of vision.
8. Get discharged a day or even hours after surgery based on the treating doctor's order.
9. Visit the doctor several times until gaining full recovery.
10. Prepare the medications prescribed by the doctor and use them regularly.

After surgery, avoid the following:

- Intense coughing or sneezing
- Straining to defecate
- Sudden movement of the head
- Lifting heavy objects
- Frequent bending
- Squeezing the eyelids or rubbing the eye
- Bending lower than your waist or prostration for 3 weeks
- Sleeping on the operated eye's side or on stomach
- Washing head and face with soap and shampoo for 1-2 weeks after surgery
- Driving and intense activities until the doctor sees fit
- Entrance of water into the eye for 2-3 weeks, even after being allowed for taking a bath
- Watching TV or reading while observing the standard distances is ok.
- Vegetables and fruits must be included in your diet.

Important points in using optic drops and ointments:

- The prescribed medications must be used as ordered.
- Wash your hands both before and after using optic drops.
- To use optic drops, sit down, bow your head behind a little bit, and pull down the lower eyelid.

If you are using more than one type of drops, make sure to have an interval of at least 5 minutes between their use. If you are using another medication after optic ointments, make sure to have a distance of at least 10 minutes between them.

Note: In case any of the following symptoms arise, contact your doctor:

- Feeling a pain that is not responding to normal tranquilizers
- Progressive blurring of vision and too much water shedding from the eye
- Progressive nausea, vomiting, and coughing; trauma to eye