

CATARACT, is the loss of transparency of the lens of the eye. It often appears like a window that is fogged with steam.,WHAT CAUSES CATARACT FORMATION?,\* Aging, the most common cause.,\* Family history.,\* Steroid use.,\* Injury to the eye.,\* Diabetes.,\* Previous eye surgery.,\* Long-term exposure to sunlight.,HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE A CATARACT?,\* The best way for early detection is regular eye examinations by your medical eye doctor. There are many causes of visual loss in addition to the cataract such as problems involving the optic nerve and retina. If these other problems exist, cataract removal may not result in the return or improvement of vision. Your eye doctor can tell you how much improvement in vision is likely.,DOES IT TAKE A LONG TIME FOR A CATARACT TO FORM?,Cataract development varies greatly between patients and is affected by the cause of the cataract. Generally, cataracts progress gradually over many years. Some people, especially diabetics and younger patients, may find that cataract formation progresses rapidly over a few months making it impossible to know exactly how long it will take for the cataract to develop. ,WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR CATARACTS?,The only way to remove a cataract is surgery. If the symptoms are not restricting your activity, a change of glasses may alleviate the symptoms at this time. No medications, exercise, optical devices or dietary supplements have been shown to stop the progression or prevent cataracts.,It is important to provide protection from excessive sunlight. Making sure that the sunglasses you wear screen out ultraviolet (UV) light rays or your regular

eyeglasses are coated with a clear, anti-UV coating will help prevent or slow the progression of cataracts.,HOW DO I KNOW IF I NEED SURGERY?,Surgery is considered when your vision is interfering with your daily activities. It is important to evaluate if you can see to do your job and drive safely. Can you read and watch TV in comfort? Are you able to cook, do your shopping and yard work or take your medications without difficulty? Depending on how you feel your vision is affecting your daily life, you and your eye doctor will decide together when it is the appropriate time to do surgery.,WHAT IS INVOLVED WITH CATARACT SURGERY?,This surgery is generally performed under local anesthesia on an outpatient basis. With the assistance of a microscope, the cloudy lens is removed and replaced with a permanent intraocular lens implant.,Right after the surgery you should be able to immediately perform all your normal activities except for the most strenuous ones. You will need to take eye drops as directed by your eye doctor. Follow-up visits are necessary to make sure the surgical site is healing without problems.,This procedure is performed on over 1.4 million people each year in the United States alone, 95% without complications. With this highly successful procedure, 90% of the time vision improves unless a problem also exists with the cornea, retina or optic nerve. As with any surgery, a good result cannot be guaranteed.