



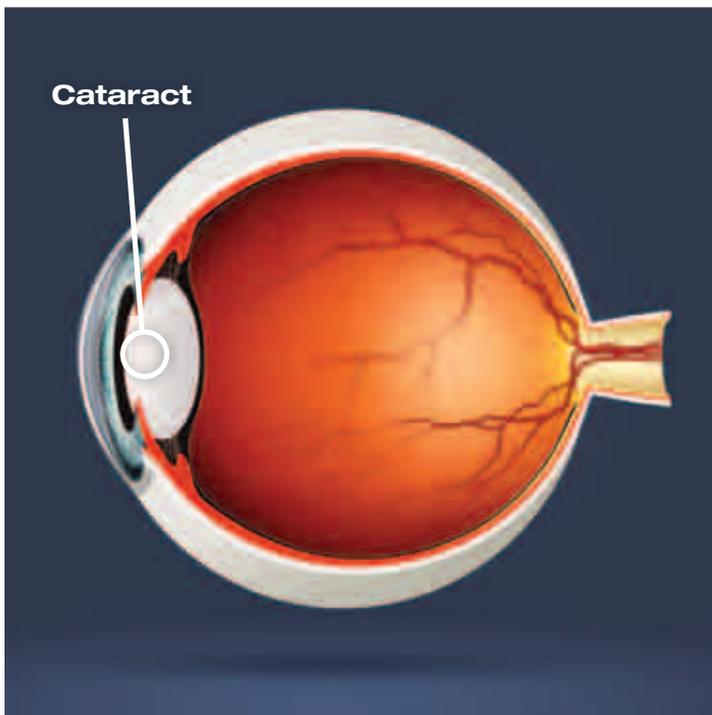
Dr. Michael Grossman

Is Cataract Surgery Right for Me?

By Dr. Michael Grossman, Illinois Retina & Eye Associates

As we age and talk to friends or family that have undergone cataract surgery, this is a question many of us face. It's also a question more people are asking than ever before. Cataract surgery is no longer relevant only to those 60 years of age and older — active lifestyles are leading more and more baby boomers to consider surgery to maximize their vision. Often, our answer is to simply “let the doctor tell me when I'm ready.”

This doesn't have to be the case. With even a very basic understanding of cataracts one can make a confident and informed decision together with their doctor about when it is an optimal time to get them treated.



What is a Cataract?

Put simply, a cataract is a clouding and hardening of the natural lens of the eye caused by changes in lens proteins usually as a result of normal aging. Thinking of the eye as a camera, the lens is what focuses light entering the eye making images sharp and clear.

As the lens becomes cloudy, the eye loses its ability to focus light. Colors become less vivid, blurry vision is apparent either while reading or at distance, it can become difficult to see in bright conditions, and, perhaps most commonly, one will have glare from headlights while driving at night.

When Do I Do Something About It?

First, remember that cataracts typically develop slowly over time and are, in the majority of cases, hardly ever an emergency to treat. Though in some cases your doctor may recommend surgery to better visualize other disease processes behind the lens

(diabetic changes or glaucoma), cataract surgery is an “elective” procedure, meaning one makes a decision with their doctor when it should be done. Here are just a few reasons one might consider in making that decision:

- Is glare from sun or headlights at night making it difficult to drive?
- Do you have concerns you may fall and hurt yourself?
- Is decreased vision affecting your ability to do your job or participate in leisure activities you enjoy?

Over the past decade, cataract surgery has seen revolutionary improvements in techniques and technology. Performed in a hospital or outpatient surgical center, the procedure is painlessly performed under topical anesthesia and takes less than 30 minutes. Simply put, the natural lens of the eye is removed and replaced with an artificial lens. Visual improvement is often remarkable immediately or the day following surgery. The variety of lens implants available today offer more options for one's vision potential than ever before and truly make your decision a customized choice.

For more information, contact Dr. Michael Grossman, Comprehensive Ophthalmologist and cataract surgeon at the Illinois Retina & Eye Associates in Peoria at 309-589-1880.

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Deciding Whether to Have Cataract Surgery

Reasons to have cataract surgery

- Poor eyesight is affecting your ability to do your job.
- The glare from the sun or headlights is severe and bothers you while you drive.
- Poor eyesight restricts your ability to participate in normal leisure or social activities.
- You are afraid you may fall and hurt yourself because you can't see well.
- Worsening eyesight is making you lose independence.

Reasons not to have cataract surgery

- Vision loss is gradual and does not affect work or daily activities.
- Another eye condition, such as glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy, or macular degeneration, may mean that cataract surgery will not improve your eyesight.
- You have poor general health and are worried about having surgery.
- Glasses or contact lenses improve your vision sufficiently.
- You do not want to have surgery.