

SAVE YOUR VISION: LEARN ABOUT CATARACTS

22 Million Americans Age 40 and Over are Affected by Cataracts

Cataracts Become More of a Problem After Age 60 and by Age 80 More than Half of Americans Have Had a Cataract

Cataracts are the leading cause of blindness worldwide. The condition causes cloudy areas in the lens of the eye that causes changes in vision. This guide has been created to help educated patients on the risk factors, symptoms and preventive measures they can take to decrease their risk for cataracts.

01 | Cataracts & Risk Factors

For those who suffer from cataracts, seeing through cloudy lenses is similar to looking through a frosty or fogged up window. Cataracts may affect one or both eyes and occur more commonly with aging. Some other risk factors include:

- Diabetes
- Excessive exposure to sunlight
- Exposure to ionizing radiation (x-ray, radiation therapy)
- Family history
- Hypertension
- Obesity
- Eye injury, inflammation or eye surgery
- Prolonged use of corticosteroid medications
- Smoking

02 | Symptoms

Symptoms of cataracts can occur gradually and may only affect a small part of the eye's lens at the beginning. Because of this, a patient may be unaware of any vision loss. As the cataract grows, the symptoms will become more noticeable and may include:

- Clouded, blurred or dim vision
- Decreased night vision
- Light sensitivity
- Seeing "halos" around lights
- Frequent changes to optometric prescriptions
- Double vision in a single eye
- Fading or yellowing of colors

03 | Treatment

In the event that prescription glasses cannot clear your vision, your eye specialist will recommend surgery. Cataract surgery involves the removal of the clouded lens and replacing it with a clear artificial lens, which will remain a permanent part of your eye. It is an outpatient procedure, and does not require a hospital stay.

04 | Decrease Your Risk

- **Smoking** – smoking increases your chances of developing cataracts and should be avoided
- **Alcohol** – limit consumption as excessive drinking can increase your risk
- **Diet** – increase your intake of leafy greens, foods high in antioxidants and Vitamins C and E
- **Sunglasses** – ultraviolet light from the sun hastens the formation of cataracts, even in younger patients. Wear sunglasses with UVA/UVB protection
- **Regular eye exams** – yearly preventive exams can detect signs of cataracts before symptoms arise.

For additional resources on cataracts and eye health, please visit: www.geteyesmart.org

*Did You Know?
Cataract Screenings are
recommended at age 40*

References

<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/cataracts/home/ovc-20215123>

<http://www.webmd.com/eye-health/cataracts/>