

**East Sussex
Vision Support**

Cataracts

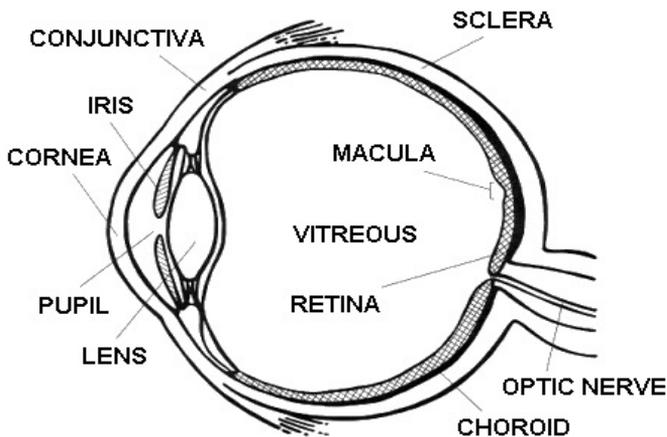


**Supporting people who are
blind or partially sighted throughout
East Sussex, Brighton and Hove.**



CATARACTS EXPLAINED

A cataract is the clouding of the lens of the eye. This means less light and vision can get through to the retina and vision becomes hazy. The lens is a transparent body behind the iris, the coloured part of the eye. Its function is to focus and bend light rays to give a clear image to the retina at the back of the eyes.



The biggest cause of cataracts is age, but in the older age group, there are great differences in severity. Cataracts usually develop gradually, taking anything from a few months to 30 years to develop.



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If a cataract starts to interfere with your everyday life, your consultant will usually arrange for it to be removed. Surgery is often undertaken on a day case basis.

Symptoms may be:

- Things may look misty.
- Colour vision changes, mostly yellowing and faded colours.
- Difficulty seeing in bright light due to glare.
- Seeing double if the cloudiness is in one place.
- Glasses may constantly seem scratched or dirty.

Normal vision is not restored just by removal of the cloudy lens. This is because the lens is important in focusing, so an artificial lens will have to be substituted.

This is usually done by inserting a plastic lens permanently into the eye and is called an implant. Your spectacles will probably need changing approximately 6 weeks after surgery, but they will not need to be thick.

Occasionally, the surgeon is unable to insert an implant and then contact lenses or thick glasses may be necessary. Cataract surgery is usually very successful, but vision could still be blurred if further underlying complications are found behind the cataract.

LIVING WITH CATARACTS

- Before your cataract operation you can help yourself by following these tips.
- Correct lighting is very important!
- Avoid glare – light shining directly into the eyes or reflecting back off a shiny surface.
- For close work and reading use direct light from an adjustable fluorescent lamp.
- Sunglasses or tinted lenses may help.
- On sunny days try a hat with a brim.

For further information on Cataracts, managing low vision, lighting or training courses, contact:

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