

Nuclear Cataract

This material will help you understand a type of cataract called nuclear cataract, its causes, and how it is treated.

What is a nuclear cataract?

A cataract is a clouding of the lens of your eye. The lens is the clear layer behind the iris (the colored part of your eye) that allows you to see images clearly (see picture on right). When the lens becomes cloudy, your vision may become blurry and colors may also appear faded or yellowed. Some patients with cataracts say it is like looking through a dirty window.

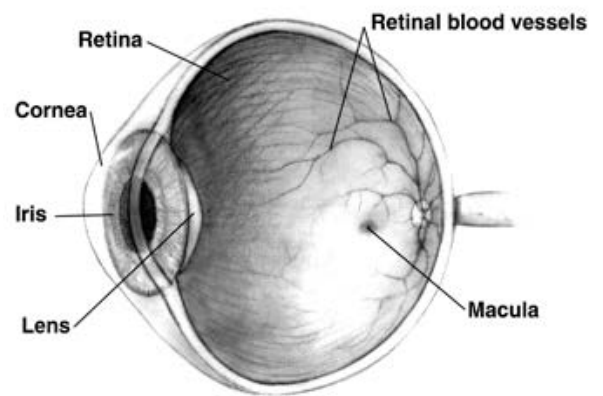


Image used with permission.
Copyright © VHI 1-800-356-0709

Cataracts usually grow very slowly, so it may take a long time before you notice any vision changes.

A nuclear cataract is diagnosed by its cause and location. It is typically related to age and is located deep in the center of the lens (the nucleus).

What causes nuclear cataract?

Proteins in your eye's lens keep it clear and let light pass through, allowing you to see clearly. As you get older, the proteins begin to break down. The proteins then clump together in the lens, causing cloudy spots. These spots prevent light from passing straight through. Over time, these spots may grow bigger, causing your vision to become blurry or dimmed.

How is senile nuclear cataract treated?

There is no way to prevent a cataract from forming. Not smoking may help slow the growth of a cataract. Early on, changing your glasses prescription can help with vision problems caused by cataracts. When your decreased vision makes it hard to do your daily activities, it may be time to have surgery to remove your cataract. During this procedure, your eye doctor will take out the cloudy lens and replace it with a clear, plastic implant (called an intraocular lens, or IOL). Discuss the right time for your cataract removal with your eye doctor.

It is also important that you see your eye doctor regularly to closely monitor the growth of your cataract.

For more information, scan these codes with your smartphone or visit the websites listed.



<http://www.kellogg.umich.edu/patientcare/conditions/cataract.html>



<http://www.geteyesmart.org/eyesmart/diseases/cataracts/index.cfm>

Disclaimer: This document contains information and/or instructional materials developed by the University of Michigan Health System (UMHS) for the typical patient with your condition. It may include links to online content that was not created by UMHS and for which UMHS does not assume responsibility. It does not replace medical advice from your health care provider because your experience may differ from that of the typical patient. Talk to your health care provider if you have any questions about this document, your condition or your treatment plan.

Author: Kathleen Koviak, MPH Candidate
Reviewers: Christopher Hood, MD and Gale Oren, MILS

Unless otherwise noted, Patient Education by [University of Michigan Health System](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License](#).

Last Revised 03/2015