

This material will help you understand pseudoexfoliation syndrome and how it is treated.

What is pseudoexfoliation syndrome?

Pseudoexfoliation syndrome is a disease of the proteins that make up many of the different structures inside the eye. It occurs when flaky, white material peels off the outer layer of lens of the eye. This material collects on the outside layer of the lens, the edges of the iris (the colored part of the eye), and the zonules. The zonules are strings that hold the lens steady inside the eye. It is like a target in the center of the pupil.

This flaky, white material collects. This can clog the eye's drainage system. In one of every three people, this material will clog the drain so much that the eye pressure will increase. This causes damage to the optic nerve, eventually causing glaucoma. That means that two of every three people with pseudoexfoliation syndrome will not ever have any issues with glaucoma. That is why we call pseudoexfoliation syndrome a risk factor for glaucoma.

One issue with pseudoexfoliation is that people develop larger cataracts more quickly than people without pseudoexfoliation do. The surgery to remove the cataract can be made more difficult by the pseudoexfoliation syndrome.

How is pseudoexfoliation syndrome treated?

People with pseudoexfoliation syndrome also develop cataracts earlier than those without the condition. These cataracts can be more difficult to remove because the zonules, or the strings holding the lens (the cataract) in place can be weakened by the pseudoexfoliation. The cataracts can also be more difficult to remove if you wait a long time to remove them. We recommend

removing cataracts in pseudoexfoliation patients as soon as you develop symptoms from them. Symptoms include vision that is not sharp even with new glasses, difficulty driving at night, and having a lot of glare from lights, especially oncoming traffic at night.

Because you are at risk for worsening cataracts and developing glaucoma, it is recommended that you have an eye exam every year. This exam will screen for early changes of eye disease so that you can get prompt treatment.

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