

# Cataracts

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This material will help you understand all about cataracts, the risk factors, symptoms, and treatment.

## **What is a cataract?**

A cataract is a clouding of the lens of your eye. As you age, proteins in your lens begin to break down and the lens becomes cloudy. Cataracts usually grow very slowly and may take a long time to affect your vision. By age 65, over 90 percent of people have a cataract. Many of these people still see just fine through their cataract.

## **What causes a cataract?**

The most common cause of a cataract is aging. Other factors include:

- Medical problems (such as diabetes)
- Eye injury
- Medicines (especially steroids)
- Radiation
- Previous eye surgery

Cataracts are not caused by overuse of your eyes and they are not contagious.

## **What is the treatment for cataracts?**

There is no way to prevent cataracts from forming. One thing you can do to slow a cataract down is not to smoke. Early on, cataracts can be overcome by changing your glasses prescription. Later on, the only treatment is surgery. An artificial lens (an implant) replaces the cloudy lens. It is time to remove a cataract surgically when it is hard to do the things you want to do on a daily basis because of your vision. Also, it is time to remove a cataract when your

vision cannot be corrected with glasses to make it legal for you to continue driving. Discuss the right time for removal of your cataract with your eye doctor.

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



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



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

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Author: Shayla Wilson, MPH candidate

Reviewers: Gale Oren, MILS and Paula Anne Newman-Casey, MD, MS

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