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## QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED AFTER CATARACT SURGERY

**Q** *What instructions are there immediately after the surgery?*

**A** **Protect the eye** by wearing any pair of glasses during the day and the plastic shield at night. These precautions can be stopped after 3 days.

**Put in the eye drops as instructed.** Usually one or two sorts of eye drops are prescribed. At the follow-up visit a few days after the surgery you will be advised about how to reduce your drops and when to stop them.

**Do not rub the eye** and avoid too much exertion such as heavy lifting or prolonged bending during the first 2 weeks after the operation, or longer if the eye is still red or uncomfortable. Light activities are allowed straight after the surgery.

**Q** *My vision is still blurred a few days after the operation - is there a problem?*

**A** The clarity of vision usually improves steadily during the first week or so after the operation. If it was clear at first for a day or more after the operation then later became constantly blurred or painful for more than a few hours you should seek advice.

**Q** *How soon after the operation will I be able to return to a normal life?*

**A** This depends on your normal level of activities. You will be able to do most normal activities straight after the operation. Heavy lifting or strenuous activity should be avoided for about 2 weeks.

**Q** *How soon may I drive?*

**A** If the vision in your non-operated eye is within the legal driving limit you may drive 3-4 days after the operation. If not, you may return to driving as soon as the operated eye achieves the level of vision required by law. Driving vision is usually achieved in the operated eye within a week or two.

**Q** *Shall I have to wear glasses after the operation?*

**A** Yes. Reading glasses are almost always needed. However, the aim will normally be to achieve good distance vision without glasses. This is not always possible - some eye conditions, especially *astigmatism* present before the operation, may require glasses to achieve the best vision for distance.

- Q** ***My vision for distance is good after the operation but reading is difficult.***  
**A** Almost all cataract surgery aims to give you good vision for *distance* rather than *reading*. If you can see in the distance clearly without glasses after the operation you will simply need reading glasses. A spectacle lens strength of 2.5-3.0 Dioptres is usually suitable. Simple reading glasses can be bought from many chemists, stores and opticians.
- Q** ***How soon should I change my glasses?***  
**A** You will be advised about this after your operation. After the usual phacoemulsification surgery (modern, small-incision cataract surgery) the glasses may be changed at about 3 weeks from the operation. A further change is occasionally necessary at about 6 months from the surgery.
- Q** ***Are lens implants available that overcome the need for any glasses?***  
**A** Newer lens implants are becoming available that can give reasonably good focussing for distance as well as near vision without glasses. They cannot be used in everyone and your surgeon will advise you. At present they are not perfected and they are not widely used. It is likely that they will be more commonly available as the technology improves in the future.
- Q** ***Can the cataract come back?***  
**A** No. However, just behind the new, implanted plastic lens is a fine membrane which is left in place to support the lens and for other reasons. This membrane is clear immediately after the operation. During the following few months, or sometimes longer, it can occasionally become opalescent or cloudy, causing some reduction of vision again. A single treatment with a laser (the 'YAG' laser), as an outpatient, almost always fully restores the vision to the level it was after the operation. It is not usually necessary to change your glasses again after this laser treatment.
- Q** ***What should I do if my vision deteriorates after the eye has healed?***  
**A** It is usually helpful to see your optician first. He may be able to improve your vision with a simple change of your spectacle lens. If he identifies another cause for the change in your vision he will suggest a further consultation with an eye surgeon.
- Q** ***Will the implanted plastic lens ever need adjustment?***  
**A** No. The lens implant is secure within the eye and it will not need to be adjusted or replaced.
- Q** ***How soon can I have surgery to my other eye?***  
**A** If you have a cataract in your other eye it can be removed within a few weeks of surgery to your first eye. It is becoming increasingly common to consider cataract surgery to both eyes at the same time if both require surgery. The risks of doing this with modern cataract surgery are only very slightly higher than surgery to one cataract. Despite this many people prefer to have each cataract removed on a separate occasion.

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