

Cataract Surgery

Cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye, which is normally due to an ageing process, but may be caused by a number of other conditions, such as trauma, diabetes and some medications such as steroids.

Symptoms

The most common symptom of cataract is blurring of vision. Certain types of cataract can also cause glare in bright lights, such as with oncoming headlights at night.

Cataract surgery

Your cataract is removed using a modern micro-surgical technique, most usually under local anaesthetic drops so that you can stay awake. This is performed while you are lying down on a bed. The technique uses a high frequency ultrasound machine to divide the cataract into a number of small pieces, which can then be removed from the eye from an incision of less than 3mm. A new foldable lens is then inserted into the eye through the same incision. This means that stitches are not usually required. The total surgical time is usually under 20 minutes, and most patients do not feel any pain. Only one eye is operated at a time, and the vast majority of patients will go home the same day.

Prior to surgery

During your initial outpatient consultation, Mr Ismail will examine your eyes and confirm your suitability for undergoing cataract surgery. You will have accurate measurements of your eyes, which will determine the strength of lens ordered for your eye. Mr Ismail will have a discussion with you about the various types of lenses that can be implanted in your eye. This will be tailored to your visual requirements. You will have an explanation of the procedure and an opportunity to ask any questions regarding the treatment.

The day of your operation

Please arrive at the ward at the time arranged, and take your prescribed medication as usual, unless advised not to do so by Mr Ismail or the preassessment team. Please bring your medication with you.

Come Dressed in comfortable clothes, and you will be asked to change into a gown provided by the hospital for the surgery itself.

The surgery will usually take around 20 minutes, and you will return to the ward straight away, but there may be a fair wait before the surgery itself due to other operations on the day, and the setting up of the operating theatre. Please bring favourite reading or listening material as you wish.

You will be given some eye drops after surgery with instructions on when and how long to use them. You will also be given an eye shield to wear until the morning after your operation and for the first week at night after surgery.

Mr Ismail will visit you, and will be happy to answer any questions, before you go home.

What are the risks?

The vast majority of patients undergoing cataract surgery have an excellent visual outcome.

There is a small risk that your sight will not be better after the operation. This may be due to another problem affecting the eye, or a minor problem following surgery, which can improve with time.

Rarely, it may not be possible to remove all your cataract in one operation. If this is the case, a second operation may be required to remove the remaining cataract, and place your new lens.

Very rarely (around 1 in 1000 patients), there may be a serious problem following surgery which can threaten the vision in the eye, and can possibly lead to permanent loss of vision in one eye.

If you have any concerns regarding the risks associated with cataract surgery, Mr Ismail would be more than happy to discuss and explain these to you in more detail.

Going home

A friend or relation should escort you home, and ideally someone should stay with you overnight. You are advised to rest on arriving back home and you should eat and drink as normal.

As the anaesthetic wears off, you may feel a small amount of aching or gritty pain. This varies considerably between individuals, but usually subsides within a few days. It is fine to take simple pain killers such as paracetamol.

Private appointments and enquiries

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