

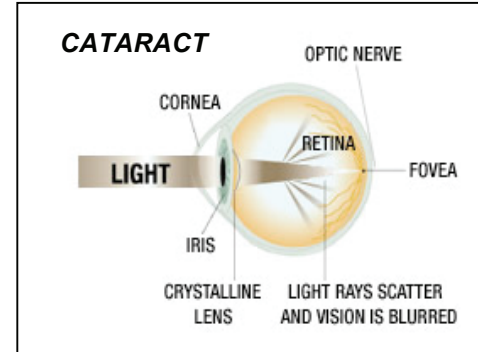
Fact Sheet: Aging Vision and Cataracts

Eye Anatomy: How We See

- The human eye consists of a series of lenses that refract (bend) light rays to focus light images on the retina. These images are then transferred via the optic nerve to the brain where we “see” them.
- The two primary focusing lenses of the eye are the cornea (outside lens of the eye) and the natural crystalline lens (inside lens of the eye).

Cataracts

- A cataract occurs, usually gradually, as the natural lens of the eye becomes clouded or discolored.
- This clouding of the natural lens of the eye causes light entering the eye to scatter prior to reaching the retina. This causes hazy or blurred vision (*See image at right*).
- If left untreated, cataracts can cause blindness.
- The only treatment for cataracts is removal of the clouded natural lens of the eye and replacing the natural lens with an artificial intraocular lens implant (IOL).
- According to the Eye Surgery Education Council, “About 60 percent of those older than 60 years and 70 percent of those older than 75 years have cataracts.”¹
- As the Eye Disease Prevalence Research Group reported in Archives of Ophthalmology, an estimated 20.5 million Americans older than age 40 have a cataract in either eye and the total number of persons who have a cataract is estimated to rise to 30.1 million by 2020.²



- MORE -

- Approximately 2.7 million cataract surgery procedures are performed in the United States – 14 million worldwide³ – each year to restore vision loss due to cataracts making it, according to the Eye Surgery Education Council, the most commonly performed surgical procedure.

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1. Eye Surgery Education Council. www.eyesurgeryeducation.com. Aug. 16, 2006.
2. Prevalence of cataract and pseudophakia/aphakia among adults in the United States. *Arch Ophthalmol*. 2004 Apr;122(4):487-94.
3. MarketScope. The 2004 Comprehensive Report on the Worldwide IOL Market. St. Louis, MO: MarketScope, LLC 2004:27.

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