

SIMPLY speaking

Common Eye Diseases

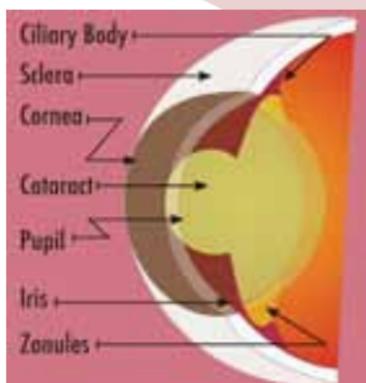
What is a Cataract?



A Cataract is the natural lens inside the eye that has become partially or completely opaque. It is situated behind the pupil, suspended by zonular fibers from the ciliary body.

● What are the symptoms of a cataract?

- Progressive blurring of vision
- Cloudiness or haziness
- Excessive glare from sunlight and headlights
- Difficulty discerning details or reading
- Other visual disturbances



● Why is a cataract formed?

The protein contents of the natural lens become disorganized and condense into an opaque mass. The precise trigger for this is unknown although trauma, metabolic disturbances like diabetes and steroids appear to hasten the process. Unfortunately, it is a part of aging and there is no prevention.

● Can it be treated medically?

No. There is no known scientifically-proven cure for cataracts although some eye drops and vitamins are purported to retard its progression.

● When is surgery necessary?

Eventually, the cataract may grow to a point that its debilitating effect on vision causes difficulty for the patient in the performance of daily tasks or in doing usual activities, such as reading, watching TV or driving. Further changing of spectacles no longer improves vision. At such time, the cataract can be easily removed by surgery.

● How is the surgery performed?

The cataract is removed by Phacoemulsification (Phaco for short) through a small slit, measuring 2.5 - 3.0 mm wide, in the side of the eye through which an ultrasonically driven probe is inserted to fragment the cataract and vacuum it out. A foldable synthetic lens (IOL) is then implanted in the eye through the same small incision. Since Phaco is completed through a small, self-sealing incision, the procedure is quick (usually < 30 mins); requires minimal anesthesia for pain-free surgery; has less potential for disastrous internal eye hemorrhage; produces only mild surgical trauma to eye tissue and less inflammation; and, does not necessitate hospital confinement or severe restriction in activities after the operation. (see *Cataract Surgery and Lens Implantation*)

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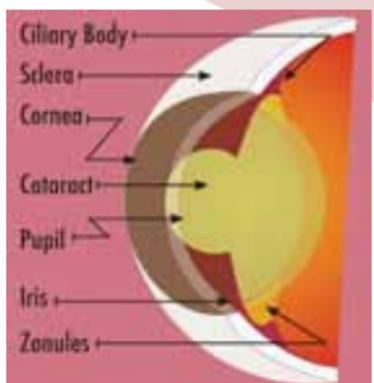
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