

THE UK GUIDE TO CATARACTS

Everything
you need to
know when
considering
Cataract
Surgery in
the UK



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Introduction

My name is Jaheed Khan and I am a Consultant Eye Surgeon at Moorfields Eye Hospital and Clinica London. My special expertise is in cataract surgery and conditions affecting the back of the eye (the retina), including AMD, diabetic retinopathy, and various other diseases of the retina.

I have over 15 years experience in treating people with eye problems just like you. That is why I know the concerns and most common questions of patients when they are looking into their eye treatment options.

In this guide, I will give you the answers to those questions. I will explain to you the benefits and risks of the different surgeries, the advantages of a private treatment, and all the different steps you will take from the first appointment to the day of your surgery.

My ethos is to deliver the best treatments in the safest environment with the latest technology. The needs of my patients always come first. I would be more than happy to consult you personally; the easiest way is to book an appointment so that we can discuss the options and questions specific to you.

Best regards,



Jaheed Khan

BSc (Hons) MBBS MD FRCOphth

“This guide was created out of conversations I’ve had with patients. I’ve recently sat down and answered similar questions on video so I could share this information online as well as here in written form. I hope you like the conversational and straight forward nature of this guide.”



Cataracts at a glance

What is it?

- Cataracts are part of the natural ageing process within the lens of the eye.
- Cataracts become more misty over time - similar to looking through a fog, or patchy vision, which makes it harder to focus.
- Cataracts are yellowish in colour, then turn brown, and then eventually go white.
- Cataracts impair the amount of light entering the eye that allows for clear vision.

What are the symptoms?

- Difficulty appreciating colours
- Difficulty reading
- Problems recognising faces
- Glare from bright lights

Who is at risk?

- Nearly 1/3 of people over 65 have a cataract.
- Cataracts are more common in women.

What causes it?

- Getting older, Diabetes, Smoking, Uveitis (inflammation of the middle layer of the eye: the uvea), Excess alcohol intake, Steroid medication, Injury to the eye, Ultraviolet light exposure

How they are diagnosed?

- A full ocular history and exam
- A dilated eye exam

What is the treatment?

- Each eye can take only 20 to 25 minutes to treat.
- We use a local anaesthetic.
- We make the eye numb by putting anaesthetic drops in the eye.
- We nick the eye and break up the lens inside. Then we pull it out
- This allows us to remove the old cloudy lens.
- We then implant the new lens, and you'll have clear vision.

What is the prognosis?

- If your symptoms are mild, you might decide to leave them alone.
- Left untreated, cataracts will likely get progressively worse, and might eventually lead to blindness.

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What is a cataract?

A cataract describes an ageing process within the lens of the eye that causes it to become more misty and it's similar to looking through a fog, or patchy vision, which makes it harder to focus. When you are young, the lens is clear, but as you get older, the lens becomes more and more opaque.

A cataract begins yellowish in colour, then turns brown, and then eventually goes white. As it does so, it impairs the amount of light that allows for clear vision. **Removing the cataract allows you to see more light and enables you to focus again.**

"Just keep up the good work Dr Khan. My wife, who accompanied me, and I were both very impressed by the care and consideration shown by the whole team when I had surgery. I just hope they haven't lost the knack by the time I get my other eye fixed. Joking apart the care of this team has made it a wonderful experience for me."

- Patient



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Why should I have private cataract surgery?

There are five main reasons why you should seriously consider private cataract surgery:

1. Eligibility

There are people who might not be eligible to have cataract surgery through the NHS. One example is a patient who wanted to drive again, but was having trouble with seeing oncoming headlights at night. He had a mild cataract. It wasn't bad enough to reduce his vision on the reading chart in the clinic, but it was bad enough for him to not feel safe driving at night. Unfortunately in that situation, cataract surgery on the NHS was not available to him. Private cataract surgery is an obvious solution in that circumstance.

2. Speed

We have fairly long waiting lists on the NHS. You can get your cataract surgery done more quickly by going private. With private cataract surgery, you can generally have cataract surgery within a week. Speed, is a considerable advantage.

3. Choice

You have the ability to choose the best cataract surgeon for you by going private. It's up to you who performs your cataract surgery when you go private. You can look at the different surgeons performing private cataract surgery, and choose the one you feel most comfortable with, based on their affability, ability and availability.

4. Access

You have access to the consultant surgeon throughout your private cataract surgery patient pathway. The NHS needs to train their junior doctors. They too have to have experience in having cataract surgery. So, it may be the case that you might have a junior doctor, whilst supervised, perform your cataract surgery on the NHS. In fact, you might never see a consultant surgeon until there is a concern or particular problem. Privately however, you should see a consultant from start to finish, including your first appointment, the surgery itself, and aftercare appointments.

5. Technology

The other main advantage of private cataract surgery is that you can have the choice of premium lenses. In the NHS, you get the standard lens. This offers you the ability to see at distance after your cataract surgery, but you will continue to need reading glasses after basic cataract surgery.

In the private sector, you can choose from all sorts of premium lenses – multifocal or toric. These lenses will help you get out of readers, varifocals or bifocals (as in the case of multifocal) and will correct astigmatism (in the case of toric). Another major advantage of these premium lenses, is we have started to develop even finer techniques of removing the cataract. This includes using a femtosecond laser which has the ability to optimise cataract surgery to enhance safety and efficacy.

“An excellent Doctor who puts the concerns of his patients first which does not always occur. I can rely on his advice as the best for me.”

- Patient



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What are the benefits and risks of private cataract surgery?

A great benefit of private cataract surgery is the fact that you can regain the lifestyle you had before your disease. There are no restrictions anymore. You can enjoy freedom after your surgery. A cataract surgery enables you to focus on things, or to read. You can get back to doing things without wasting time - probably one of the most important assets nowadays. **Your vision after cataract surgery can even be better than it was before you developed cataracts.**

The risks of any cataract surgery are exactly the same whether it's done on the National Health Service or privately. Eye surgeons provide a very detailed document that you should use and read before you have cataract surgery. Once you come and

"I came away from the consultation feeling as informed as I could be, all my questions answered, and that I had made the right decision to fly all the way from New Zealand to have this consultation."

- Patient

see an eye surgeon, they should discuss the major risks which are relevant to you.

The main risks that eye surgeons worry about are infection in the back of the eye. That has been improved over the years with the introduction of antibiotics at the time of surgery and using antibiotics after the surgery.

The risk of having a bleed within the eye during a surgery is very low; your eye surgeon should ensure that patients are not exposed to any unnecessary risks due to high blood pressure before the operation.

There are other minor risks, but we must remember: Ninety-six percent of patients have successful cataract surgery. The majority that

don't, have problems we can sort out. Over the many years that cataract surgeries have been around, we have reduced the risks to fairly insignificant numbers.

Privately, eye surgeons can pick up the risks earlier, partly because they see you sooner, for a longer time, and more than once.



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What happens at a private cataract surgery appointment?

It's very important that you see an eye surgeon at your appointment. First of all you should get an assessment for your vision. Your eye surgeon should ask you to objectively measure your vision on a chart. It is a simple, tried and tested way of assessing how much you can see in the distance.

Then you should be assessed by your eye surgeon, you should have a long chat about what your symptoms are, such as blurred vision, loss of colour and difficulty focusing. Any other past eye history which is relevant to you should be discussed. As well as assessing your past medical health history, your eye surgeon should make sure that you aren't on any medications that could be causing the problems with cataracts.

Your eye surgeon measures certain aspects of the eye. They should look at the front of the eye first and measure the eye pressure. Your eye surgeon also should dilate your pupils on your first visit. Your pupils should get dilated with drops and that will make your vision temporarily blurred. They can then have a good look at your cataract to make sure that there are no changes at the back of the retina.

Eye surgeons should do other tests which involve imaging, just to ensure that you have a fully healthy eye before considering cataract surgery.

"Many thanks to Mr Khan. His prompt diagnosis and explanation was very reassuring indeed."

- Mr. R, Patient



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What happens on the day of a private cataract surgery?

The day of the surgical appointment, you should come in fairly early because you and your operation need to be set up.

That involves basic measurements by nursing staff: measuring your blood pressure and your blood sugar - if relevant. Eye surgeons will also use the same dilating drops that were used during your initial consultation to dilate the pupils. That enables your surgeon to access your cataract in the surgery to ensure that they can do it safely and effectively.

The assessment usually takes about half an hour, and then you're taken up to the operating theatre - you can remain in your clothes. You don't have to get changed. Normally you should not go to sleep. Instead, you should get a local anaesthetic. You will lie flat on the bed for about 10-15 minutes and your eye surgeon will chat to you the whole way through. Before you know it, you will be out of the operating theatre and back to what you enjoy doing best.

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Why should you choose me for private cataract surgery?

What I can provide for you is a wealth of experience. **I've done many thousands of cataract operations over the years.** I've been trained in one of the leading institutions in the world - Moorfields Eye Hospital, where I am a NHS consultant.

My availability is very good, I can provide cataract surgery very quickly for you.

I pride myself on a personal approach. I will treat you as an individual. We have a lot of time to discuss your initial worries, and I'll reassure you about your cataract surgery, ensuring that you're happy with the choices that you make, and make sure that you have the best possible vision at the end of it.

"Really impressed with his high level of knowledge and professional manner. I was really taken back by the high level of service which Dr. Khan gave."

- Patient



I also pride myself on my low complication rates. We all have a degree of complication rates that we need to address, but mine are usually much lower than the national average. And we will discuss all of those risks in detail to make sure that you're happy.

The other advantage of choosing me is that I love operating, and because I do so much for the National Health Service, it doesn't feel unnatural to do quite a lot of private cataract surgery too.

Eye surgeons are only really as good as how much do you on a monthly basis and keeping one's hand in is very important. I would recommend myself for that particular reason. You should also ensure that you have someone you can connect with.

Final words

I know from experience that it is not always easy to decide - there are lots of things to consider and this guide can only give a general overview. That is why I recommend you to have a personal appointment with an eye surgeon where you can discuss your needs in detail. You will recognise soon if you feel comfortable. For me in particular, it is tremendously important that you are happy during the whole process. The needs of my patients always come first.

To simplify your decision to arrange an appointment, I would like to conclude with 10 reasons to call me:

1. I am a top London cataract and retinal specialist surgeon
2. I have lower than average complication rates for cataract surgery
3. I offer personal and customised attention at every step
4. I have access to cutting-edge technology and everything Moorfields Eye Hospital has to offer
5. My fees are fully covered by insurance and transparent pricing models
6. My results are better than the national average for clinical outcomes
7. I am highly trained as a consultant ophthalmologist who specialises in diseases that affect the retina
8. I have 15 years of experience at one of the world's most respected eye hospitals
9. You'll receive the best care, as an individual
10. My private practice is overflowing with testimonials and 5-star ratings

If you would like to discuss your particular eye concerns please call us on 020 7305 5063 to make an appointment. We'll explore the best treatment options for your eyes so you can get back to doing what you love.

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