

# Cataracts



These free series of booklets are designed to help you, your friends and family understand your eye condition.

Other titles in this series include

Age related macular degeneration

Diabetic retinopathy

Retinal vein occlusion

Central serous retinopathy

Posterior vitreous detachment

To re-order any of these free booklets please contact us on [0203 811 0501](tel:02038110501) or email [jaheed.khan@moorfields.nhs.uk](mailto:jaheed.khan@moorfields.nhs.uk)

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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.



It is 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.

# What are the symptoms of cataract?

Blurred vision is a common symptom of cataract.



Difficulty  
reading  
small print

Problems  
recognising  
faces

Difficulty  
appreciating  
colours

**Cataract  
symptoms**

Glare from  
bright lights

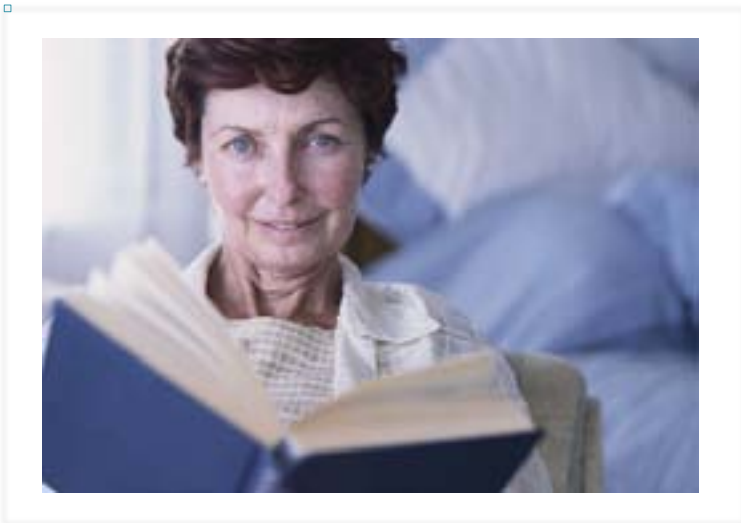
Double  
vision

Difficulty  
driving at  
night

## Who is at risk of cataract?

Nearly a third of people aged over 65 have cataracts.

Cataracts are slightly more common in women.





△

Ageing

△

Steroids

△

Diabetes

△

Smoking

**Causes of  
cataract**

△

UV light  
exposure

△

Eye  
inflammation

△

Eye injury

△

Excess  
alcohol

# How do you diagnose cataracts?

An ophthalmologist or optometrist will conduct a

- A full ocular history and eye examination.
- A dilated eye examination, where drops will be put in the eye to make your pupil large to see the cataract in more detail.



## Do cataracts develop quickly?

Most cataracts develop slowly and your symptoms appear gradually.

## Is a cataract a film growing over the eye?

No, a cataract is a misting of the lens inside your eye.

## Do cataracts develop in both eyes?

They usually do but in certain cases they can affect one eye more than the other.

# What is the treatment of cataracts?

- Surgery is the only treatment for cataracts.
- Each eye generally takes 20 minutes to treat.
- We use a local anaesthetic in the large majority but sedation to relax you or general anaesthesia is available for more anxious patients.
- Cataract surgery is a day-case procedure and you do not need to stay in hospital.
- We make small self sealing openings at the side of the eye and break up the cataract inside the eye. A high frequency ultrasound probe in the eye removes the cataract.

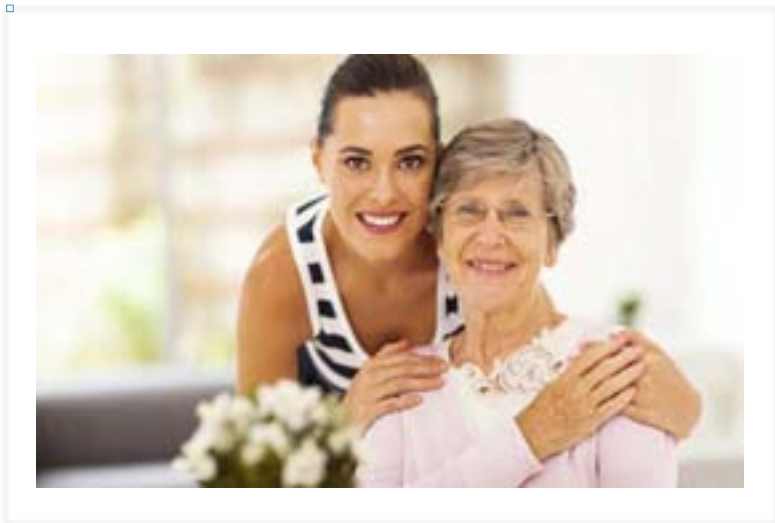
- We then implant a new replacement artificial intraocular lens in the eye.



- You then have clear vision in a few days.
- This new artificial lens implant does not need replacing.

# What is the success rate of cataract surgery?

- Cataract surgery is one of the most successful operations performed.
- 96% of patients achieve excellent vision.



# What are the risks of cataract surgery?

- Minor complications can occur in 3% of patients and can usually be treated with further surgery or drops, with good visual outcomes.
- Major complications are rare with the risk of infection inside the eye at 1 in 1000 and a bleed at the back of the eye occurring in 1 in 10000.
- Using preventative antibiotics inside the eye has reduced the risk of infection.

# Five reasons to have private cataract surgery

## **1. Eligibility**

Some people may not be eligible to have cataract surgery on the NHS such as patients who do not live in the UK and patients with mild cataracts that produce symptoms but not a reduction in vision measurements.

## **2. Speed**

We have fairly long waiting lists on the NHS. You can arrange your cataract surgery more quickly if you choose to go privately. You can generally have private cataract surgery within a week or two. Speed is a considerable advantage.

## **3. Choice**

You have the ability to choose your cataract surgeon. You can look at the different surgeons performing private cataract surgery, and choose the one you feel most comfortable with, based on their affordability, ability and availability.



## **4. Access**

You have access to your preferred surgeon throughout your cataract surgery care including your first appointment, the surgery itself, and all aftercare appointments. This does not always occur on the NHS and you may be more comfortable seeing one doctor throughout your care.

## **5. Technology**

The other main advantage of private cataract surgery is that you can have a choice of multifocal lenses. On the NHS, we generally use a monofocal standard lens. This can offer you the ability to see at distance after your cataract surgery, but you will generally need to continue to use reading glasses after your operation.

With private cataract surgery, you can choose from various intraocular lens upgrades to correct astigmatism and also increase the chance of being spectacle free after your cataract surgery using multifocal intraocular lenses.

# About the author

My name is Jaheed Khan and I am a Consultant Eye Surgeon based at Moorfields Eye Hospital and Clinica London, 140 Harley Street, London with NHS and Private Practices.



My special expertise is cataract surgery and also conditions affecting the back of the eye (the retina), which includes age related macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and retinal vein occlusions.

I have over 15 years experience in treating people with cataracts just like you and have performed thousands of successful cataract operations.



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.

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Visit my website link  
for more information

[http://  
jaheedkhan.co.uk/  
cataract-guide/](http://jaheedkhan.co.uk/cataract-guide/)

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You can call me

0203 811 0501

Thank you,

Mr Jaheed Khan BSc MBBS MD FRCOphth

## Contact details

Mr Jaheed Khan BSc MBBS MD FRCOphth  
Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon  
Cataracts and Medical Retina  
Clinica London  
140 Harley Street  
London W1G 7LB

Moorfields Private  
John Saunders Suite  
9-11 Bath Street  
London EC1V 9LF

Tel : 0203 811 0501

Email : [jaheed.khan@moorfields.nhs.co.uk](mailto:jaheed.khan@moorfields.nhs.co.uk)

Further information

<http://jaheedkhan.co.uk/cataract-guide/>