

Nethra Arogyam

Cataract

Signs & Symptoms



EYE CARE WITH CARE

Cataract

Cataract is the clouding of the eye's clear lens, making it difficult for a person to have a clear vision.

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Clouded visions make it difficult to read and drive, especially in the dark or night. According to World Health Organization (WHO) **Cataract is the leading cause of blindness as it accounts for 50% of blindness worldwide.**

Most cataracts develop slowly and don't disturb eyesight in the early stages but it certainly develops over the years and affects the vision. It is important to get eye check-up once a month, and get the treatment done at the early stages of cataract. Aged people are the most common victims of cataract. It can also affect children but is rare. It can affect one eye (unilateral) or both the eyes (bilateral).

Signs and symptoms:

Dim, clouded or blurred vision

1. Growing difficulty with vision at night
2. Light sensitivity and glare
3. Need for brighter light for reading or daily chores
4. Seeing halos around light
5. Frequent changes in glasses or contact lens prescription
6. Fading or yellowing of colours
7. Double vision in a single eye

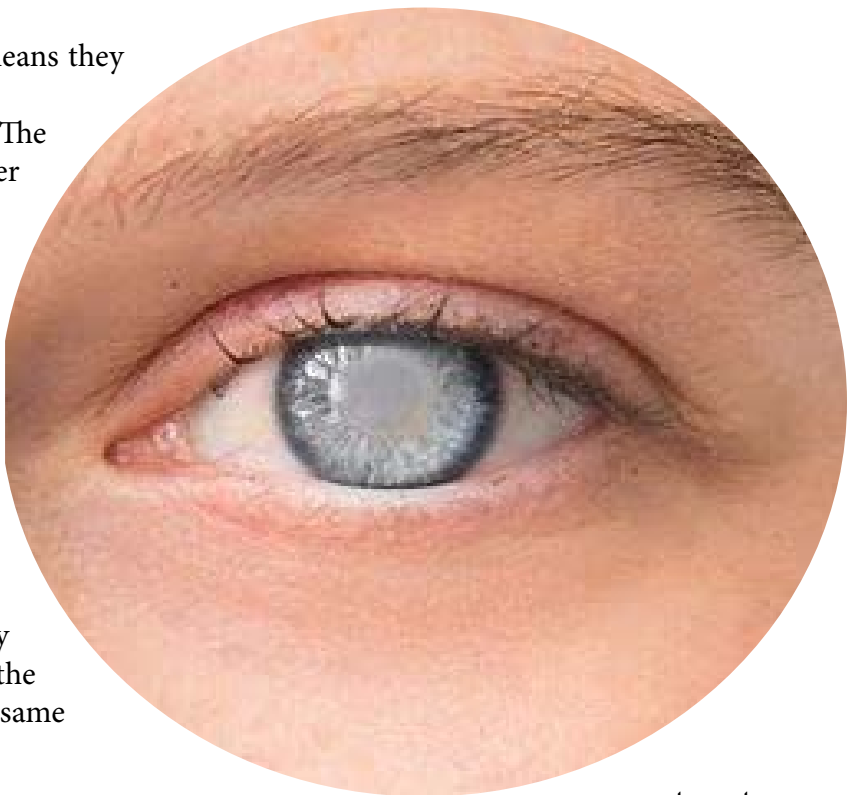
Take an appointment at the earliest if you

notice any of the mentioned symptoms and signs.

- **Dim, clouded or blurred vision:** People who have cataracts, looking at something is a bit like looking through a frosty or fogged-up window or an unfocused/blurred image.
- **Growing difficulty with vision at night:** Cataract makes it difficult to see in the dark and makes it growingly difficult to drive or read in the dim light or in the dark.
- **Light sensitivity and glare:** It is a debilitating loss of visual acuity in bright light; such as when near a bright light source or outdoors in bright sunlight.
- **Need for brighter light for reading or daily chores:** A person with a cataract might want a brighter light than a normal person would require to read or to perform any kind of daily chores, as the lens is clouded and the vision is not clear.
- **Seeing halos around light:** When the lens becomes clouded, the light is dispersed abnormally as it enters the eyes and causes a person to see halos around lights.
- **Frequent changes in glasses or contact lens prescription:** Frequent changes in prescription of eyeglasses or contact lens is a symptom for cataract, because cataracts

are usually progressive, which means they get worse over time.

- **Fading or yellowing of colours:** The proteins tend to clump together clouding your lens, which may turn to yellow or brownish, which results in all the light coming into your eye having a yellow tint. This reduces your ability to tell the difference between colours and makes it difficult to identify the colour.
- **Double vision in a single eye:** Double vision in one eye often appears as a ghosting or shadow that overlaps with the primary image. It can affect the left eye, the right eye, or both the eyes at the same time.



Types of cataracts:

- **Cataracts affecting the centre of the lens - nuclear cataracts:** A nuclear cataract may cause more near-sightedness or even a temporary improvement in your reading vision at first. But in the course of time, the lens turns more densely yellow gradually and further clouds your vision. As the cataract gradually progresses, the lens may even turn to brown. Advanced yellowing or browning of the lens can lead to difficulty in distinguishing between the shades of colour.
- **Cataracts that affect the edges of the lens - cortical cataracts:** Cortical cataract at the beginning is whitish, wedge-shaped opacities or streaks on the outer edge of the lens cortex. As it progresses, streaks extend to the centre and interfere with the light passing through the centre of the lens.
- **Cataracts that affect the back of the lens - posterior subcapsular cataracts:** Posterior subcapsular cataract is a type of cataract, in which there is opacification in the back portion of the eye lens, which is the path of light. In this case cataract can occur alone or in combination with other types of

cataracts as well. A posterior subcapsular cataract often interferes with your reading vision, and reduces your vision strength against bright light which causes glare or halos around lights at night. These types of cataracts tend to progress faster compared to other types.

- **Cataracts you are born with - congenital cataracts:** Few people are born with cataracts or develop them during their childhood. These types of cataracts may be genetic, or associated with an intrauterine infection or a trauma. These may also be due to certain conditions such as, myotonic dystrophy, galactosemia, neurofibromatosis type 2 or rubella. Congenital cataracts do not always affect the vision but if they do, they are usually removed soon after detection.

Treatment for Cataract:

Unfortunately, at this point there is no way to get rid of cataracts without a surgery. Some ophthalmologists are exploring for alternatives but at this point of time, only surgery can cure cataracts.

Cataract surgery is a procedure to remove the opacified lens of your eye and in most cases it is replaced with an artificial lens called as intraocular lens, which will be positioned in the same place as your natural lens. This remains as a permanent part of your eye.

Before surgery: Surgeon will measure the eye to determine the proper focusing power for your Intra-Ocular Lens. You may be prescribed with eye-drop medicines before surgery. These medicines help prevent infection and reduce swelling during and after the surgery.

During the surgery: Your eye will be numbed with eye drops or with an injection around the eye. You may also be given a medicine to help you relax. You will be awake during surgery and you may see light and movements during the procedure, but you will not be able to see what the doctor is doing to your eye. Surgeon looks through a special microscope and creates a tiny incision (a cut, created by

blade or laser) near to the edge of cornea to reach the lens of the eye using very small instruments; surgeon then separates the lens with the cataract and removes it. After the removal a new lens is placed.

The incision is either stitched by the surgeon or in most cases leaves it for “self-sealing” in which the incisions will get closed over a span of time. A shield will be placed over your eye for protection until it is healed. After the procedure you will be asked to rest in a recovery area for about 15–30 minutes. Then you will be free to go home.

Post Surgery: Post-surgery, you may face some discomfort for a few days, but it will be healed within a week or two.

Cataracts can become complicated if not treated at the earliest and if left untreated can cause blindness. Experts suggest that a yearly examination of the eye is necessary to maintain your eyes healthy.

CATARACT

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