

Initial Surgical Evaluation

During your cataract evaluation appointment at Clayton Eye Center, our doctors and staff will determine whether surgery is the next step and help you select the intraocular lens (IOL) that's best for you. We'll make sure you understand and feel comfortable with the entire surgical process. Please ask any questions you have about the timeline, side effects, or complications.

Your visit will last at least 3 hours and consist of the following steps:

Testing

Our team will conduct advanced diagnostic testing to determine how the unique characteristics of your eye will interact with different types of IOLs.

Doctor Evaluation

Your surgeon will complete a full eye exam to determine the overall health of your eye and review your IOL options.

Surgical Scheduling

Once you and your surgeon have decided that cataract surgery is the right next step, you will meet with our surgical coordinators to review your IOL selection and sign all necessary paperwork. You will be asked to get medical clearance from your primary care provider and/or specialist.

THE SURGERY: Quick but Complex

The typical cataract surgery lasts 10 to 15 minutes, although some cataracts may require more time. You will be at the surgery center for about 4 hours in total. You will need someone to drive you home. Here's a step-by-step overview of the procedure:

1 Preparation

Our surgical team will wipe the skin around your eye with disinfectant, administer medicated eye drops to prevent infection and inflammation, and keep your pupil dilated during the procedure.

2 Anesthesia

Your eye will be anesthetized with topical drops or a local injection, depending on what your surgeon decides is best for your case. You won't be put to sleep for the procedure, but you'll likely receive a mild sedative in your IV, so that you are relaxed and comfortable.

3 Removing the Cataract

After making a tiny incision (2-3mm) in your cornea, your surgeon will insert an ultrasonic probe to gently break up and remove the cataract.

4 Inserting the New Lens

Once the cataract has been removed, your surgeon will replace it with the IOL of your choice. The IOL is folded and inserted through the same tiny corneal incision. Once inserted, the IOL unfolds perfectly into place.

What to Expect After Your Procedure:

Please review your post-operative instructions for details on your eye drops after cataract surgery. Most patients will use eye drops for 6-8 weeks after surgery.

Mild discomfort: You may experience mild discomfort for a few days following your procedure. We recommend you take Tylenol and/or artificial tears for relief. If you are allergic to Tylenol, use what you would normally take for a headache. If you experience pain that cannot be relieved with your over the counter pain reliever or artificial tears, please contact the office.

Slightly blurred vision: Initially following the procedure, your vision may be slightly blurry as your eye recovers.

Eye redness: Your eye may appear slightly red; this will gradually clear during the first few days after the procedure.

Pupil dilation: You may also notice that your pupil (the black part of your eye) is a different size than the pupil of the other eye. This is normal. The pupil will slowly return to its normal size within two days after the procedure.

Months to years after surgery, 20 to 30 percent of patients experience blurred vision or a "secondary cataract." This is caused by clouding of the membrane behind the new lens and can happen with any type of IOL. It is easily treated using a YAG laser to remove the membrane behind the lens. Once treated, it will not reoccur.

A Whole New Perspective

Most patients find they can resume many of their everyday activities the day after surgery. You will notice more vibrant colors and clearer vision for the first time in years after cataract surgery!

Restored vision from cataract surgery often motivates patients to pick up the tasks and hobbies that their cataracts once prevented them from doing – you might even be inspired to take up some new ones. And why not? Cataract surgery doesn't just improve your vision – it opens up a whole new world of possibilities.

