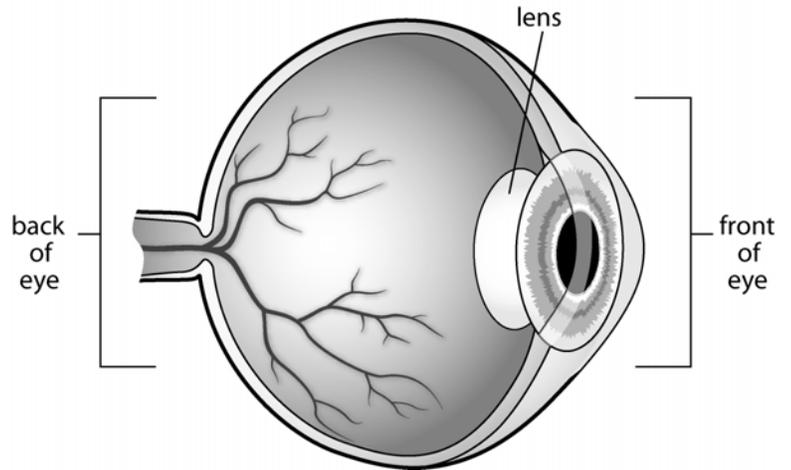


Cataract

A cataract is the clouding of the lens of the eye that makes it hard to see. Cataracts can affect one or both eyes. Cataracts are common in older people.



Risk Factors of a Cataract

The risk of a cataract increases with age. Other risk factors include:

- Some diseases such as diabetes
- Smoking
- Alcohol use
- Prolonged exposure to sunlight

Signs of a Cataract

Signs of a cataract develop slowly over time.

- Cloudy or blurry vision
- A halo is seen around lights or lights are too bright
- Poor night vision
- Double vision
- Colors seem faded

Your Care

See an eye doctor if you have any signs. Your doctor will do an eye exam to check for problems. If your vision problems interfere with your daily activities, your doctor may suggest surgery. During surgery, the cloudy lens is removed and replaced with an artificial lens. You and your doctor will decide together if surgery is the best treatment option for you.

Your lens may cloud slowly over time, so you may not need surgery for years. Your doctor may suggest new glasses, brighter lighting, anti-glare sunglasses or magnifying lenses to improve your vision. Be sure to have regular eye exams so that you and your doctor can discuss when surgery is needed.

How to Protect Your Vision

- If you are age 60 or older, have an eye exam with dilation at least every two years.
- Eat plenty of green, leafy vegetables, fruits and other foods with antioxidants.
- Wear sunglasses and a hat to block ultraviolet sunlight.
- Manage diabetes with the help of your doctor and dietitian.
- Quit smoking.
- Limit alcohol.

Talk to your doctor or nurse if you have any questions or concerns.