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What Is Cataract Sugery And How Does It Work?

By Gray Rollins

Cataract surgery involves the surgical removal of the lens of an eye that has formed a cataract.

Cataract extraction is the one of the most common eye surgeries performed and is widely regarded as being one of the safest procedures in the medical community. A cataract occurs when the crystalline lens of the eye becomes cloudy or opaque as a result of age, illness, or trauma. This cloudiness can interfere with the eye's natural ability to direct light and focus an image on the retina. As a result, individuals with cataracts frequently experience a loss of vision.

There is no known way to reverse the damage caused by cataracts, although the complete removal and replacement of the affected lens with an artificial lens can restore an individual's vision. The two most common procedures for cataract extraction are called ICCE (intracapsular cataract extraction) and ECCE (extracapsular cataract extraction). Both of these procedures are typically done under a local anesthetic on an out-patient basis, so cataract surgery patients are free to go home the same day.

Extra-capsular surgery involves the removal of the affected lens while leaving the majority of the elastic lens capsule intact. This allows for the direct implantation of an intraocular lens into the lens capsule. Extracapsular surgery may be performed using one of two methods: conventional ECCE or phacoemulsification. Conventional ECCE involves making a small incision into the cornea or the sclera of the eye. The cataract is then manually removed through the incision so that a replacement intraocular lens can be inserted. Conventional ECCE is best suited for those patients who suffer from very hard cataracts or who have a weak or thin epithelium covering the cornea.

The second method, phacoemulsification, makes use of an ultrasonic handpiece. Ultrasound waves vibrate the cataract, causing it to shatter and break up into a number of small pieces. These pieces are then removed through aspiration via a small incision in the cornea, after which a replacement intraocular lens can be inserted. Phacoemulsification uses a much smaller incision and may not even require stitches, with the result that this procedure often affords patients a shorter recovery period.

Intra-capsular surgery involves the removal of the entire lens of the eye including the lens capsule. This procedure was commonplace up until the 1980's in the United States, but is rarely performed

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today due to medical advances in cataract surgery. To extract the lens the surgeon makes a large incision in the cornea and injects medicine into the eye. This causes the zonular fibers that hold the lens in position to break apart and dissolve. A small probe is inserted into the incision and placed on the lens so that it may be frozen via a cryogenic solution, such as liquid nitrogen. The probe is then withdrawn from the eye, pulling with it the frozen lens. Once the affected lens has been removed, an intraocular lens implant may be inserted in front of the iris as a replacement. Finally the incision is stitched up.

Intra-capsular surgery has a high risk of complications due to the pressure that is placed on the vitreous body of the eye during the procedure. Patients have a prolonged period of healing (up to 6 weeks), and are at a high risk for retinal detachment and swelling of the eye. It is for this reason that nearly all modern cataract extractions are performed via the extracapsular surgery method.

Gray Rollins is a featured writer for MyEyeSurgery. To learn more about cataracts, visit

<http://www.myeyesurgery.com/cataracteyesurgery/>

and for information about glaucoma, visit

<http://www.myeyesurgery.com/glaucoma/>

Common Cataract Surgery Complications

By Gavin Sanderson

Cataract is not a disease. Instead, it is a condition whereby the crystalline lens in the eye develops a clouding or opaqueness. This reduces the amount of light that reaches the retina. It ends up causing a person to experience foggy or hazy vision. The condition will get worse as time passes. The causes of cataracts include aging, prescription drugs, eye trauma or an ongoing medical condition.

Cataracts are treated using surgical removal methods. This is a very common treatment and it has a ninety five percent success rate. There are risks however. Some may develop fluctuating eye pressure, bleeding, infection, inflammation, double vision and loss of vision. There are some common temporary risks that may be corrected with time and then more serious risks. The more common and temporary of the cataract surgery complications include:

Cataract Surgery Complications: Itchiness, Stickiness, and Pain

*Itchiness to the white of the eyes with some redness.

*Stickiness to the eyes in general, along with itchiness. The patient may experience blurry vision for awhile after the procedure.

* Some patients feel pain in their eyes for about a week to two weeks

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* Some may have eyelids that ache.

Cataract Surgery Complication: Rip of the Lens

A more serious cataract surgery complication is when the lens behind an eye rips during a surgery. This will cause damage to vision. The doctor must perform another surgery to take away the cataract.

Two types of cataract surgery procedures done today. One is the phacoemulsification surgery and the other is known as extracapsular surgery procedure.

Cataract Surgery Complication: Posterior Capsular Opacification

The phacoemulsification surgery requires a lens capsule or casing to be left in the eye for the benefit of placing an intraocular lens into it. After surgery, one of the more common complications may be that the capsule would become cloudy and develop another cataract within a two year time frame. This complication is termed "posterior capsular opacification". The cataract must then be treated with laser surgery. Other familiar cataract surgery complications are discussed below.

Cataract Surgery Complication: Retinal Detachment

This condition occurs when fluid enters through a tear to the retina. The retina ends up becoming detached from the backside of the eye.

Cataract Surgery Complication: Choroidal Hemorrhage

Choroids are a web of small blood vessels that supply blood to the retina. Choroidal Hemorrhage is when this web of vessels bleed in the surgery. This may happen to older patients or people who suffer from glaucoma.

Gavin Sanderson is an established freelance writer. You can find more of his writing at

<http://www.cataractzone.com>

and

<http://www.lasik-central.com>

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