

PROMOTION

You can see clearly now

Cataract surgery allows other conditions to be corrected at the same time, with the bonus that you may no longer need glasses

Common in both men and women, cataracts affect the lens of the eye, causing it to become cloudy. Normally clear, the lens focuses the light so images appear sharp, but as the lens ages it becomes misty and vision begins to fade.

How are cataracts treated?

Mild cataracts can be treated with an up-to-date glasses prescription, but eventually – once the clouding of the lens passes a certain point – surgery is required to clear the vision.

There are no eyedrops or food supplements that have been proven to treat cataracts, although an experimental eyedrop is currently being researched.

What is cataract surgery?

Cataract surgery is performed under local anaesthetic and takes between 20 and 30 minutes. The operation is painless, but you may experience an interesting and colourful light show.

Using keyhole surgery, the cloudy lens is replaced with a new lens implant made out of plastic. In the majority of cases, no stitches are required.

MEET THE EXPERT



Mr Alex Shortt, MB, BCh, MSc, PhD, FRCOphth, is a consultant at London's Moorfields Eye Hospital. He is a clinician-scientist at University

College London and a fellow of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists

Mr Shortt qualified in 2003 and has since built a reputation for his expertise in laser vision correction, complex corneal disease, conjunctival disease and cataracts. He trained at the National University of Ireland in Dublin. This was followed by a PhD at University College London and nine years' clinical training at Moorfields Eye Hospital. Mr Shortt is known for the high standard of his patient care, every aspect of which he carries out personally.

Which type of cataract surgery should I choose?

Not all cataract operations are the same. A basic operation simply changes the lens, and patients will almost certainly need to continue wearing glasses for reading and possibly also for distance viewing and/or watching television.

If you choose a surgeon who performs refractive cataract surgery then the operation can be combined with

astigmatism correction and a more sophisticated multifocal lens implant to minimise, and even abolish, the need for glasses after surgery.

Such refractive cataract surgery requires additional scans, complex planning calculations and the use of multifocal – similar to varifocal – lens implants, which are provided only by refractive cataract specialists.

What about laser surgery?

In the past few years, a new laser has been developed that has made cataract surgery completely blade-less. However, the role of this femtosecond laser in cataract surgery is being hotly debated by surgeons as there do not appear to be many advantages and it is a significantly more expensive treatment.

Patients should focus on the correction of their astigmatism and choosing the correct lens implant, so that the need for glasses after cataract surgery can be diminished.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Every aspect of care is undertaken by Mr Shortt