

Cataract

Cataracts are opacities of the lens that develop gradually over time. These are age-related and are typically painless. When examining patients we see a cloudy, opaque lens, which leads to decreased visual acuity. The definitive treatment for cataracts is surgery.



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Mechanism

Age-related

Older Adult

There is no specific cause for cataract development, but rather it is because of the aging process. Some forms of cataracts can be secondary to congenital defects, injury, or from another eye disease (rubella, UV exposure, corticosteroids).

Assessment

No Pain

No Pain-bolts sign

Typically, cataracts develop insidiously because these are painless. Patients do not complain of any eye-related pain.

Cloudy Opaque Lens

Cloudy Opaque Eyes

When assessing a patient, we see a cloudy, opaque lens that can be described as milky. A totally opaque lens creates the appearance of a white pupil.

Decreased Visual Acuity

Down-arrow Eye Accuracy

The patient with cataracts may complain of a decrease in vision, abnormal color perception, and glare. Glare is due to light scatter caused by the lens opacities, and can be significantly worse at night when the pupil dilates that leads to a decrease in night vision.

Occurs Gradually

Gradual Decline

The development of cataracts are gradual, as is the loss in vision in patients. The rate of cataract development varies with the individual.

Treatment

Surgery

Surgeon

Surgical removal of the lens is the best treatment for cataracts. The lens is removed completely and replaced with an intraocular lens implant. This is performed one eye at a time.