

CATARACT

When the normally clear lens within your eye becomes cloudy and opaque, it is called a cataract. Cataracts vary from small areas of cloudiness to large opaque areas that cause a noticeable loss of vision. Cataracts are most often found in persons over the age of 60, but they are also occasionally found in younger people, including newborns.

No one knows exactly what causes cataracts. It is known that a chemical change occurs within your eye that causes the lens to become cloudy. This may be due to advancing age or it may be the result of heredity, an injury or a disease. Excessive exposures to ultraviolet radiation, cigarette smoking or the use of certain medications are also risk factors for the development of cataracts. Cataracts usually develop in both eyes, but often at different rates.

Currently, there is no proven method to prevent cataracts from forming. Wearing sunglasses can protect your lens from harmful UV rays. A diet rich in antioxidants (such as Vitamins A, C, E, Zinc Selenium & Magnesium) is seemingly also beneficial.

Cataracts develop without pain or redness, some indications that a cataract may be forming include blurred or hazy vision, the appearance of spots in front of the eyes, or the feeling of having a film over the eyes. Increased sensitivity to glare, especially at night may be experienced.

In the early stages of a cataract, where vision is only minimally affected, your optometrist can prescribe new lenses for your glasses to give you the sharpest vision possible. When the cataracts start to interfere with your daily activities and glasses cannot improve this vision, your optometrist will refer you to an eye surgeon who may recommend the surgical removal of the cataracts.