

Overall benefits of cataract surgery include:

Improved Colour Vision: Colours are brighter and more vivid.

Greater Clarity of Vision: Vision is crisper and sharper.

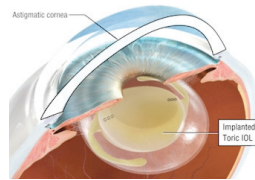
Improved Quality of Life: Studies have shown that people enjoy improved quality of life after successful cataract surgery. Many people can resume driving and activities such as reading, sewing, golf and using a computer are generally easier after cataract surgery.

Greater Freedom From Corrective Lenses:

Most people are able to see well in the distance after Cataract Surgery. However, with a standard lens, reading glasses will be required for close work.

Toric Lenses - Removal of astigmatism:

Newly developed Toric lenses allow the power of the lens to be different at different orientations within the eye. This allows correction of abnormal corneal curvature, known as astigmatism, and increases independence from spectacles post-operatively without the need for additional incisions on the cornea.



Multifocal lenses - No reading glasses: These lenses offer the potential to see well for near and distance without the use of glasses following cataract surgery in selected cases. Many people are delighted with this option but it does have some drawbacks, including possible haloes around lights at night.

Toric-Multifocal Lenses - Decreased astigmatism and no reading glasses: A recent development is the combination of both the Toric and Multifocal components of intra ocular lens technology, allowing insertion of a lens which minimises use of glasses for both near and distance, even in patients with high degrees of astigmatism.

Remaining Glasses Requirement: Eye measurement and lens technology are continually improving but many patients find that vision will improve even further after cataract surgery if a small spectacle prescription is used.

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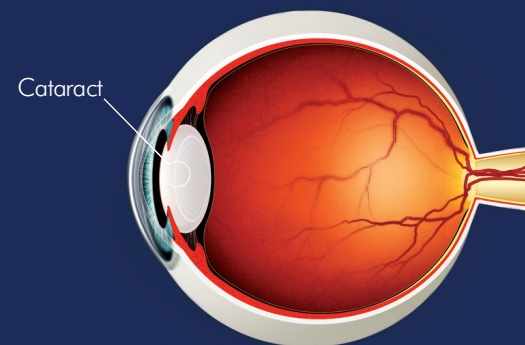
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Micro-Incision Cataract Surgery

Patient Information Leaflet



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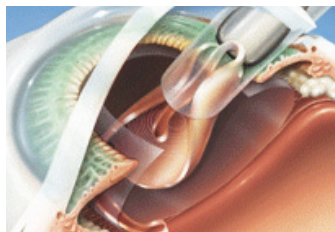
What is a Cataract?

A cataract is a clouding of the natural focusing lens in your eye. It is a common, usually age related process. Light cannot pass through a cataract easily, so the retina only receives a blurred image. The retina is then unable to send clear signals to the brain, and vision is gradually impaired. Other symptoms include dazzle from car headlights and the need to change glasses frequently. In very advanced cases all vision may be lost. The decision whether or not to have cataract surgery depends on how daily life is affected. Fortunately, almost all cataracts can be successfully removed and vision restored through modern microsurgery techniques.

Cataract Microsurgery

Mr Tanner has recently introduced new techniques allowing incision size to be decreased to less than 2 mm. These small incisions seal themselves immediately after surgery without stitches and normal daily activities can be resumed soon after surgery. Another advantage of no-stitch incisions is that they do not cause a focusing problem known as astigmatism. After the incision has been made a round opening is created in the lens capsule. A phacoemulsification probe is then inserted to break the cataract into tiny pieces which are sucked out of the eye. Phacoemulsification uses high-speed ultrasound waves, vibrating 40,000 times per second. A lens implant is then placed in the lens capsule to replace the focus power of the natural lens.

Lens implants are 6-12 mm wide and are designed to fit permanently within the lens capsule. They are made of stable polymer plastics which will not be rejected by the eye. Lens implants come in different powers, as do glasses or contact lenses and are selected to improve the eye's focusing ability. Many people discover that lens implants improve their vision and give them greater freedom from glasses. However, some degree of spectacle correction often still improves vision further. Recent advances in lens technology allow for the shape of the intra ocular lens to be adjusted to the profile of the cornea, allowing increased contrast sensitivity and better visual acuity post-operatively.



A replacement intraocular lens is inserted and then unfolded in the eye

Painless Cataract Surgery

Cataract surgery is a painless experience and the vast majority of operations are now done as a day case procedure. Mr Tanner uses two kinds of anaesthesia - topical anaesthesia and regional anaesthesia.

Topical anaesthesia is very popular with many people because no needles are required. Instead, painless drops are used to numb the eye. No eye patch is needed and patients usually notice improved vision after 24 hrs.

Sub-tenons anaesthesia involves gently injecting a local anaesthetic into the tissues around the eye. The eye is patched for the rest of the day and patients usually notice improved vision after 24-48 hours.

Topical anaesthesia is Mr Tanner's preferred technique as it offers a quicker recovery with fewer side effects and is completely pain free. The eye is fully anaesthetised but otherwise you are awake during the procedure, which takes about 15 minutes.

The operation is usually performed as a 'day case', shortening the time in hospital and reducing expense for the patient.

Local anaesthesia also avoids the post-operative 'hangover' from a general anaesthetic, as well as avoiding the risks of an anaesthetic in patients with, for example, chest problems. Of course, general anaesthesia is still available for patients who prefer to be completely asleep. Many patients worry that they will see what is happening during the operation but all that people usually notice is a bright light and vague shapes. Although you have to lie fairly still, there is no need to be rigidly immobile; you can adjust your position or even cough or sneeze, provided some warning is given.

Risks and Complications

Many advances in recent years have made the operation safer and improved visual outcome. However, you should be aware that there is a small risk of complications, either during or after the operation. Complications are usually treatable, possibly requiring further surgery. In a few cases serious problems such as infection or retinal detachment occur which may result in visual loss. Mr Tanner runs a continuous audit programme and his results are consistently better than national benchmark data.

One of the commonest problems following cataract surgery is the development of posterior capsule opacification as a reaction to the presence of the lens implant. This can result in blurring of vision but is easily treated as an out patient laser procedure.