

Are cataract causes always age-related?

About Dr. Ilan
Cohen

What Causes a Cataract?

As your eyes age, they may become less able to process light and reflect sharp images because the lens has gradually become cloudy – this is called a **cataract**. The vast majority of cataract sufferers have developed this condition as they have grown older, making age one of the primary cataract causes. As a matter of fact, nearly half of all Americans over the age of 80 have cataracts (called “senile cataracts”) or have already had surgery to correct them.



In addition to advancing age, other cataract causes include:

- Long-term exposure to ultraviolet light
- Long-term and short-term exposure to radiation
- Consequential effects of diseases such as diabetes and hypertension
- Eye trauma or eye injury
- Congenital conditions (present at birth, passed on through DNA)
- Prolonged use of corticosteroids

Allergic or atopic conditions of the eye can also speed up the onset of cataracts, particularly in people who are predisposed to this condition. These are common cataract causes in children and young people.

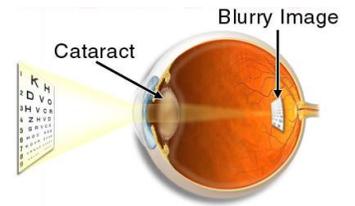
Some occupations provide more risk for cataracts. A study of Icelandair pilots shows that commercial airline pilots are three times as likely to develop cataracts than other professions which do not involve flying. Excessive exposure to radiation coming from outer space may be another of the chief cataract causes.



Additionally, any jobs that expose workers to an unusually high amount of infrared radiation, such as in the glassblowing industry, are also susceptible to high levels of cataracts. This is called “exfoliation syndrome.” Exposure to microwave radiation is another example of cataract causes, so industries that involve close contact with satellite transmission equipment, radar equipment, radio wave transmitters and other similar machinery can also be more disposed to cataract development over time.

What Happens to the Lens When a Cataract is Present?

Cataracts are the result of a change in the structure of lens protein. This change causes the lens to cloud over and become foggy in appearance. When clouding occurs on the lens, it cannot transfer clear images to the retina of the eye. The retina acts like the film in a camera, instantly developing the images that are passed through the lens. If cataracts are present, these images cannot be developed properly.



The Newest Premium Lens Options

How We Can Help

Cataracts can typically be resolved with [outpatient cataract surgery](#) at the 5th Avenue Eye Center in New York and New Jersey. Cataracts can occur in one or both eyes, and can also be partial or total across the lens. They can be stationary or progressive, as well as hard or soft. With such immense variation in the types of cataracts, it is vital that you search for [the best cataract surgeon in New York and New Jersey](#) for your procedure.

With more than 40 years in the field of ophthalmology, [Dr. Ilan Cohen](#) is the premiere cataract surgeon in New York and New Jersey. Along with his professional staff, Dr. Cohen will provide you with a relaxing experience when you come in for your free consultation. With the latest medical technology and training, the [5th Avenue Eye Center](#) is a leading provider of cataract surgery in Manhattan and Glendale, New York, and Old Bridge and Middlesex County in New Jersey.

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