



## EYE APPEAL OPTOMETRY

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### Cataract

Cataracts occur as part of the normal aging process and can severely reduce your vision. Studies show that virtually everyone over age 65 has some cataract formation in their eyes. At one time, cataracts were a leading cause of blindness in the world. But today, they can be treated successfully. Modern surgical techniques, intraocular lens (IOL) implantation and "same day surgery" make cataract surgery safe, fast and effective.

A cataract occurs when the normally clear lens of the eye becomes cloudy. As the cataract develops, the cloudiness no longer allows the lens to properly focus light on the back of the eye. This unfocused light causes the vision to look blurry, hazy and at times sensitivity to light. Development of cataracts has been associated with exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. They are particularly prevalent in persons who spend a lot of time in the sun, such as fishermen. There are ways to slow down the formation of cataracts. Wearing glasses/sunglasses that contain UV protection and taking vitamin C may slow it down.

Treatment is indicated when the vision is reduced to the point that it affects your everyday activities or hobbies. To determine how much your vision is decreased, your doctor will perform various tests.

Cataract surgery, in which the normal cloudy lens is removed, is now a very successful procedure. The most widely used technique is called phacoemulsification. A very small incision is made and a tiny ultrasonic probe is used to break up the cataract and gently suction it away. A clear membrane is left in your eye where an IOL is placed. This IOL is necessary to replace the focusing power of the natural lens, which was removed. With insertion of an IOL, there is little need for thick cataract glasses and contact lenses that were once used in the past.

Small incision surgery has several benefits. The procedure is very quick, sometimes taking less than 20 minutes. Also, recovery time is short. Patients are able to eat a light snack and drink immediately after the surgery. The results of the surgery vary among individuals, but most people notice an improvement with their vision in a couple of days after surgery. Glasses may still be needed for various visual tasks while your eyes are getting used to the IOL implants.

Sincerely,

Henry T. Oishi, O.D.