

Information Regarding Your Upcoming Cataract Evaluation

What is a Cataract?

A **cataract** is defined as a clouding of the natural lens of the eye. The lens is approximately the size of an M&M candy and sits just behind the colored iris of your eye. When you are born, the lens is clear but with time the natural lens becomes clouded and causes blurry vision. A cataract can progress until eventually there is a complete loss of vision in your eye. Cataract surgery can help you restore your vision long before you can experience loss of vision that is significant enough to interfere with your daily activities.

During cataract surgery, the clouded natural lens is dissolved and replaced with a plastic intraocular lens (IOL). The IOL is intended to remain permanently in place and requires no maintenance or handling. The standard IOLs used in cataract surgery are called **monofocal IOLs** because their focus is set to provide distance or near vision, but not both. Patients who receive a monofocal IOL often still need to wear glasses to achieve the clearest focus for distance and near objects because of their **astigmatism** and/or **presbyopia**.

What is Astigmatism? If I have Astigmatism, do I have options for correction?

Astigmatism is characterized by an irregular curvature of the cornea. The eye of a person with astigmatism is shaped more like a football or the back of a spoon. For this person, when light enters the front part of the eye, it is bent more in one direction than the other, causing a blurry, distorted image. About half of the population is born with astigmatism. If you have astigmatism, and you want to see clearly in the distance, you need to wear glasses or contact lenses. There is also the option to receive a **Toric IOL**, which is an astigmatism-correcting IOL, during cataract surgery. The Toric IOL can correct most of your naturally occurring corneal astigmatism, therefore reducing your dependence on glasses following cataract surgery.

Our practice also offers laser-assisted cataract surgery using the **CATALYS® Laser**. The laser precisely creates limbal relaxing incisions (LRI) to reduce or eliminate patient's astigmatism, and/or aides the placement of Toric or Multifocal IOLs.

What is Presbyopia? What are my choices?

With time, almost everyone is affected by presbyopia. **Presbyopia** is caused by the loss of flexibility of the natural lens and the weakening of the lens's focusing muscle, which causes patients to lose their ability to see up close. It becomes evident to most of us at about age 45 and that's why we have to start wearing reading glasses or bifocals. Patients who undergo cataract surgery with a monofocal IOL will need to have reading glasses to see up close afterward. Presbyopia is not treated by the standard monofocal IOL. Patients who choose one of these presbyopia correcting IOLs (**Multifocal IOLs**)

can usually see far away, at intermediate distance, and up close while greatly reducing their need for glasses and possibly eliminating them altogether.

Paying for Your Lenses and the CATALYS® Laser

Depending on the results of your examination, you may have the option to choose a Toric IOL, or a Multifocal IOL, or you may choose a standard monofocal IOL.

Regardless of your options all of the lenses will help you see better, so there is no wrong choice.

Medicare and insurance typically cover the cost of cataract surgery with a standard monofocal lens. If you would like to take advantage of the advanced lenses and/or CATALYS® Laser, the procedure will still be covered, and you can choose to pay an additional fee for these lenses. Talk to us about those details.

We thank you for reading this introduction. During your visit you'll have the opportunity to hear more about these choices to improve your vision. We look forward to your examination and to helping you learn more about these exciting new options.

Sincerely,

Shaleen Belani, M.D.