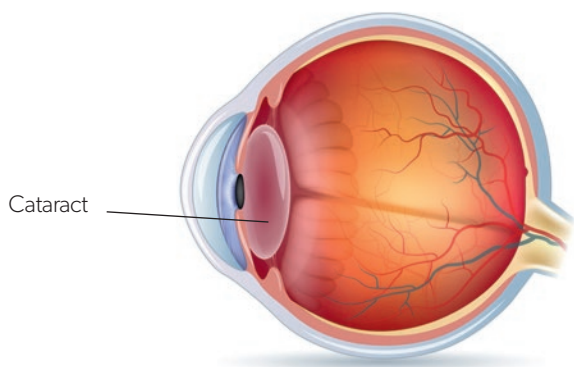


What is a cataract?

A cataract is clouding within the natural lens of the eye, which distorts light, meaning you can't focus clearly.

Cataracts can cause reduced vision and eventually blindness if left untreated and usually develop in both eyes at the same time.



Some people are more likely to suffer from cataracts than others:

- Older people - it is estimated that one in three people over the age of 65 suffer from cataracts
- People with a family history of the condition
- A blow to the eye can occasionally cause a traumatic cataract

Conditions such as diabetes and certain medications, can result in a cataract forming, and smoking may speed up the progression of certain types of cataract.

How do I know if I have a problem?

Cataracts are painless and their symptoms may vary from person to person. They can include:

- Blurred vision
- A gradual loss of colour vision – objects appear duller
- Difficulty reading
- Poor vision in low light situations
- Frequent changes of prescription glasses
- An increased sensitivity to bright lights
- Double vision, even with only one eye open

These symptoms do not necessarily indicate a cataract, but you should always visit your optometrist or doctor if you are worried.

What treatment is available?

Cataracts can be treated by a routine operation.

The cloudy lens is removed and replaced by a synthetic one. The operation is usually carried out as an outpatient procedure.

How do I get help?

If you are worried you may have a cataract, you should visit your optometrist or doctor at the earliest opportunity.