

Cataracts are probably the most common condition that we see as ophthalmologists. There's a common misconception that it's a growth inside the eye. It's not. It's a natural clouding of the lens that we're born with. It happens as a result of age. So, if you live long enough, you're going to get a cataract. People who have diabetes, maybe have been on steroids or have chronic inflammation inside their eye, may develop cataracts early in life, but everybody will at some point.

The only way cataracts can be treated is with surgery. There's no drops, there's no laser, there's only surgery. Surgery involves removing the natural lens of the eye, which is now cloudy, and replacing with an artificial lens. The reason we have to put an artificial lens in is because the natural lens provided a certain amount of power to the eye in order to focus. If we didn't put a new artificial lens in, you wouldn't be able to see anything at all, except for with very high powered glasses.

There are three reasons to do cataract surgery. The first is because it's medically necessary, which means that there's some reason, medically speaking, that we need to remove the cataract, either because the cataract is creating a problem or it's preventing us from seeing a problem in the back of the eye. The second reason is because someone's vision has fallen below the level required for driving, and if somebody wants to maintain their driver's license, they have to have their cataract. The third, and the most common reason, really, is because somebody's not happy with their vision. So when someone says, I can no longer do the things that I enjoy doing, whether it's driving, golfing, watching TV, going to the movies, that's probably the most of the time the reason we're doing surgery. T

here's two ways that are commonly used in North America to remove a cataract, and that is using a manual method, meaning all the incisions are made inside and outside the eye by hand and with the blade or a laser can be used to make those incisions as well, and that is called phemtosecondassisted cataract Surgery. Both surgeries still require surgeons to be inside the eye, and both surgeries still require an intraocular lens.

It's important to know the risks of surgery that you're thinking about, and cataract surgery has risks. It's very safe overall. It's one of the safest surgeries that medicine has available today, but there are still some risks. Overall, if you talk to most clinicians, they'll tell you that 95% of patients will see better after surgery. 4% of patients will see the same, 1% of patients will see worse, and there's a 1 out of 1000 chance that you might lose your vision to bleeding or infection. The reality is that odds are probably much better than that, and unless you have any specific challenges with your surgery, and your surgeon will let you know you have a very, very good chance of seeing better after surgery.

The best way to find out if you have a cataract and if that's the problem that's giving you challenge with your vision is to visit your local optometrist, and they can refer you to a local surgeon who does cataract surgery. It's really important to keep in mind that the lens that you choose, and the surgery that you have is going to be permanent and that, make sure that you educate yourself in all the different options that are available to you.