

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Prepared by: Ophthalmology and Same Day Surgery, QE II
Illustration by: LifeART Super Anatomy 4 Images, Copyright © 1994,
TechPool Studios Corp. USA

Designed and Managed by: Nova Scotia Health Library Services

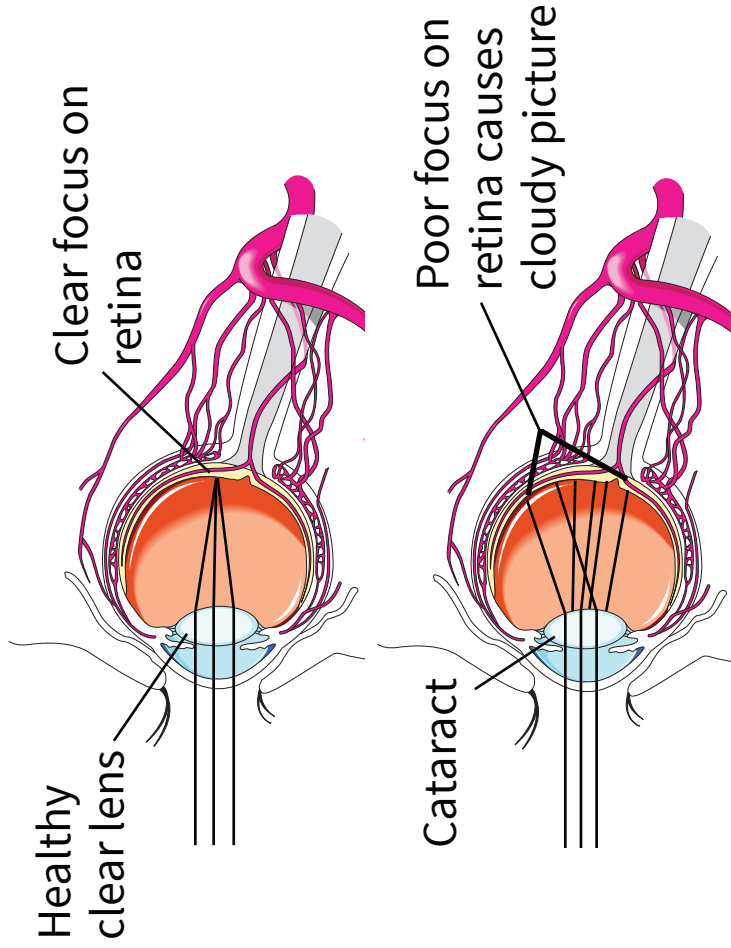
WW85-0135 © June 2023 Nova Scotia Health Authority
To be reviewed June 2027 or sooner, if needed.
Learn more: <https://library.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources>

Cataract Surgery

Cataract Surgery

What is a cataract?

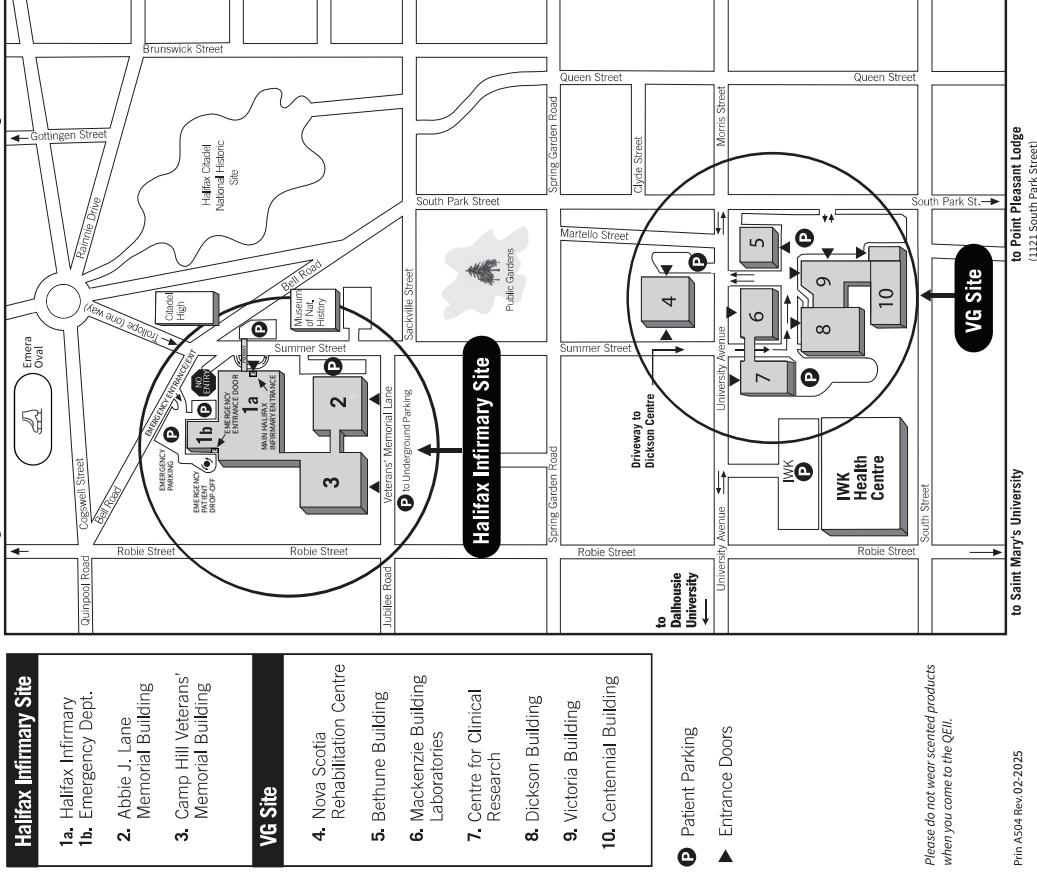
A cataract is a clouding of the lens of your eye. The centre of the lens gets hard and cloudy. This makes it hard for your eye to focus light.



- Cataracts can be caused by aging, an eye injury, disease, and some medications.

QEII Health Sciences Centre

is made up of 10 buildings located on two sites



- Close your eye gently. Keep it closed for 1 full minute (60 seconds).
- Use a tissue to gently remove extra drops from your cheek.
- Wash your hands well.
- **Do not stop using your drops without checking with your eye surgeon.**

Call your eye surgeon right away if you have:

- › Severe (very bad) pain or swelling
- › Unusual discharge (like blood or pus)
- › Sudden change or loss of vision
- › Sudden flashes of light in your eye
- › A shadow, like a dark curtain has been drawn across your eye

If you cannot reach your eye surgeon, call Locating at the VG at **902-473-2222** and ask to have the ophthalmology resident on call paged, or **go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.**

- Common symptoms of cataracts are:
 - › Blurred vision
 - › The glare of a halo around lights
- Cataracts **do not** cause pain, irritation, itchiness, or watery eyes.

Cataract surgery

- Cataracts can be removed easily with surgery.
- This is usually done using a **local anesthetic**. This means you are awake during surgery. The eye surgeon will give you medication to freeze your eyes. You may also be given medication to help you relax.
- The surgeon will make a small incision (cut) in the front of your eye. They will remove the cataract. They will then place a clear, plastic lens in your eye behind your pupil.

What are the possible risks?

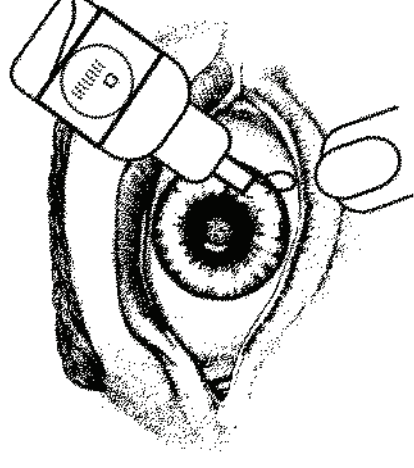
- Cataract surgery is safe and effective. As with any surgery, cataract surgery has risks.

- There are risks whenever anaesthesia is used, but these will be low since you will not be put to sleep for the surgery.
- Some rare risks of cataract surgery can cause blinding. Other risks may bother you, but they can be treated.
- There is a rare (1 in 1000) chance you may go blind caused by a complication like:
 - › Infection
 - › Bleeding
 - › Retinal detachment (when the retina pulls away from the inside wall of the eye)
- There is a chance (1 in 100) that a support bag around the cataract will break during surgery and the cataract will fall inside your eye. If this happens, you may need another surgery to fix this.
- Others risks include:
 - › Inflammation (swelling)
 - › Swelling of the retina (also called macular edema)
 - › Swelling of the cornea

Using eye drops

Follow the eye medication schedule given to you by your nurse or doctor.

- Wash your hands well.
- Shake the bottle well.
- You may sit and tilt your head back or lie down.
- Open both eyes and look up. With 1 finger, draw your lower lid down.
- With the bottle in your other hand, hold it as close as possible to your eyelid without touching it. Place 1 drop into the pocket made when your lower lid is pulled down.
- **Do not** touch your eyelid or your eye with the tip of the bottle.



- Your vision may be blurry until you get new glasses. This is common.
- You may do most of your usual activities, like:
 - › Bending over
 - › Reading
 - › Writing
 - › Watching TV
- **Do not lift anything over 20 pounds.**
- If you have a feeling of eye strain or pressure in your eye, stop whatever activity you are doing.
- After 1 week, you should be allowed to go back to all your usual activities. Talk with your eye surgeon about this.
- **Ask your eye surgeon when you can go back to work and drive a car.**
- Bring all of your eye medications and any written instructions with you when you see your eye surgeon.
- Keep all follow-up visits with your eye surgeon.

- › More pressure in the eye and glaucoma
- › A secondary cataract (posterior capsule opacification)
- › Dry eyes
- During surgery, a clear membrane (posterior capsule) is left in place to support the implanted lens. In many people, the membrane gets hazy. If this happens, in time you will need a laser treatment to have clear vision again.
- Sometimes, cataract surgery does not improve your vision. This may be because of damage from other conditions (like glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetes, or corneal disease).

Day of surgery

- Read the pamphlet *Getting Ready for Eye Surgery*:
 - › www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/0134
- The nurse will place drops in your eye to dilate (make bigger) your pupil.

- You may have an intravenous (I.V.) injected into a vein in your arm using a needle. You may be given medication through the IV during surgery, if needed.
- You will be taken to the Operating Room (O.R.).
- After surgery, you will go back to the Day Surgery Unit.
- You will then be able to go home in about 10 to 15 minutes.

Discharge instructions

- You will have a shield over your eye. Your surgeon will tell you when you can remove it.
- Your follow-up appointment with your eye surgeon is on _____ at _____.

At home

- Your eye may be red and bruised right after surgery.
- Keep taking any medications that were prescribed for you by your other doctors. Keep taking your glaucoma drops (if you use them).
- If you have discomfort in your eye, take acetaminophen (Tylenol®). Follow the directions on the package.
- **Wear your eye shield every night for 7 days (1 week) after surgery, or as told by your eye surgeon.** This will help prevent an eye injury while you sleep.
- **Wear glasses, sunglasses, or an eye shield at all times when you are outside of your home.** You **do not** need to wear them at home while you are awake.
- **Do not** wear a cotton eye pad.
- Use a clean facecloth and tap water to clean gently around your eyes. **Do not** press down or rub.
- You may shower, bathe, and wash your hair. **Do not** let soapy water get into your eye.