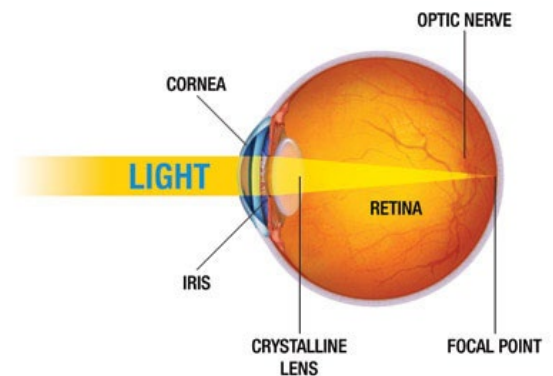


Cataracts

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Cataracts are the opacification of the clear crystalline lens inside the eye. This clouding does obstruct a person's vision making reading and driving at night a challenge and can feel like you're looking through a fogged up window.

The crystalline lens is located behind the eye's Pupil and is what filters light through to the Retina to give us a clear image. As we age the lens can become dense and the proteins within can break down or group together, causing the lens to be less clear. As time goes on, light struggles to successfully pass through the lens to the retina, decreasing vision quality.

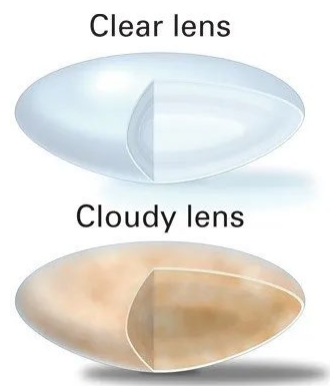


Types of Cataracts:

1. Nuclear Cataracts: affecting the centre of the crystalline lens.
2. Cortical Cataracts: affecting the edges of the lens.
3. Posterior Subcapsular Cataracts: affecting the back surface of the lens.
4. Congenital Cataracts: developed in utero or early childhood.

What can cause Cataracts?

Cataracts are usually the unfortunate result of aging. As we age the crystalline lens can't retain flexibility causing its proteins to deteriorate. This deterioration can also be aggravated by exposure to sunlight, obesity, diabetes, smoking, previous eye injury or drinking alcohol excessively. If you have a family history of Cataracts, you are at a risk of developing the condition.



Common symptoms include:

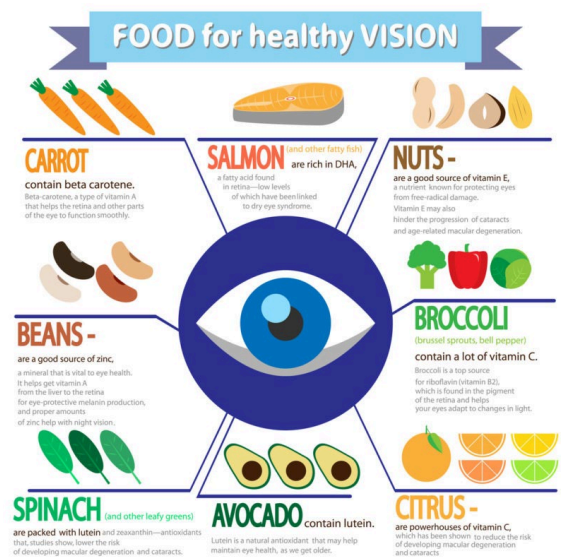
- Blurred or dim vision.
- Poor vision at nighttime.
- Sensitivity to light and glare.
- Seeing halos around lights.
- Needing more light present to read.
- Deterioration of colour vision- fading and yellowing.

Prevention

We do have several methods to help ease the effects or prevent cataracts. First would be having your eye health evaluated regularly as you get older. This way we can monitor and document any progression or signs of cataracts. We also strongly suggest wearing a sun smart hat and sunglasses when outside or driving to block harmful UV rays and glare.

Maintaining a healthy diet and cutting back on alcohol is beneficial to your overall health but especially your eye health. Insuring fruit and vegetables are in your daily diet gives your eyes essential antioxidants, vitamins, and minerals needed to sustain your eyes.

Smoking is a no no. Smoking causes a multitude of eye health issues including cataracts. The crystalline lens proteins are more likely to deteriorate at a rapid rate compared to non-smokers due to the chemicals in cigarettes.



Treatment of Cataracts

Cataracts are treated with surgical intervention. Once a patient with Cataracts has reached level of deterioration which effects their everyday vision, an Optometrist then refers them to the care of an Ophthalmologist to replace the effected lenses. Most patients have an intraocular lens (IOL) inserted at the time of surgery, with excellent results. This is a plastic lens that replaces now cloudy lens. Most patients after 6 weeks are then fitted for reading glasses.

Some surgeons now offer extended focus intraocular lenses (MFIOL), allowing correction for both distance and near vision without glasses. These work to varying degrees of success with haloes around lights and decreased contrast sensitivity a common side effect. Generally,

MFIOL work best for those who don't drive much at night, are long-sighted, healthy retinas, and have a relatively good tolerance to blur. Your suitability for a MFIOL should be discussed at length with your optometrist.



If you are wanting to discuss Cataracts further or would like to have an eye health evaluation, call our friendly team to book an appointment. At Buck and Todd Optometrist, we take the time to care for your vision to the fullest.