

Cataract Removal

Continually, physicians find that patients are often misinformed on the specifics of cataracts and their removal. In the eye, behind the iris (the colored part of the eye) is a lens. Kim Baggett, RN, CRNO, Surgical Supervisor at McLeod Ambulatory Center, describes the lens as being “similar in size and shape to a plain M&M.” When any part of that lens becomes cloudy, it is then termed a cataract.

Baggett explains, “If the cataract is not near the center of the lens, its presence may not be noticed.” Regular eye exams help patients become aware of any changes occurring in their eye. “Whatever the cause, decreasing vision should always be checked by an ophthalmologist,” Baggett remarks.

Common symptoms of a cataract include:

- A painless blurring of vision
- Glare, or light sensitivity
- Frequent eyeglass prescription changes
- Double vision in one eye
- Needing brighter light to read
- Poor night vision
- Fading or yellowing of colors

The most common cause for cataract development is aging. However, family history and medical problems such as diabetes, injury to the eye, and medications such as steroids also play a significant role in cataract development. Many people connect cataracts with older adults, but even babies can be born with a cloudy lens. It is important to remember that cataracts are a common cause of poor vision, particularly for the elderly, but they are treatable.

Cataracts can only be removed by a surgical procedure. Although it is a common misconception, lasers are not used to remove cataracts. During cataract surgery, the inside of the lens is removed with the use of the latest technical instrumentation and the use of a microscope. “After removal of the contents of the lens, explains Baggett “, an implant to help correct vision is inserted permanently into the area where the lens material was removed.”