



Wasatch View Eye Care

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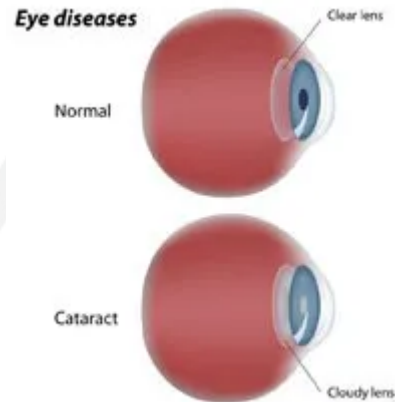
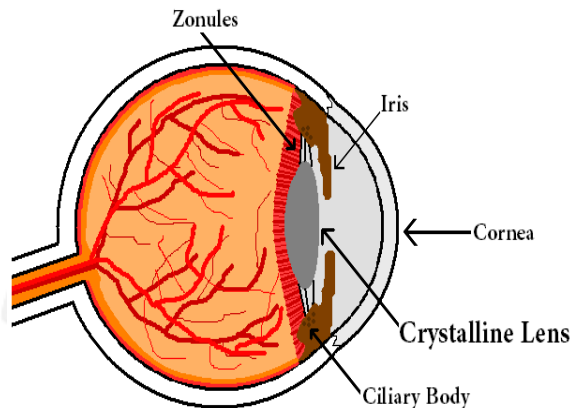
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## Cataracts

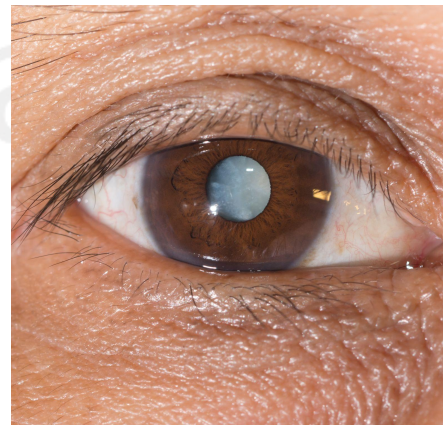
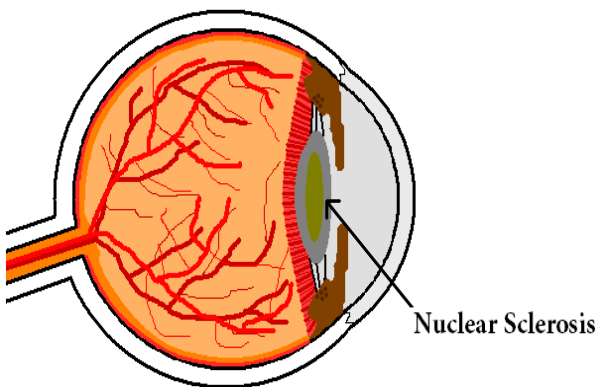
### Overview

Cataracts are a clouding of the crystalline lens. The crystalline lens is located just behind the iris and helps to focus light on the retina. It is attached to the ciliary muscle by zonules. When the ciliary muscle contracts tension is released on the zonules and the crystalline lens grows in axial length. This increases the power of the eye and enables us to focus on objects at a near distance.

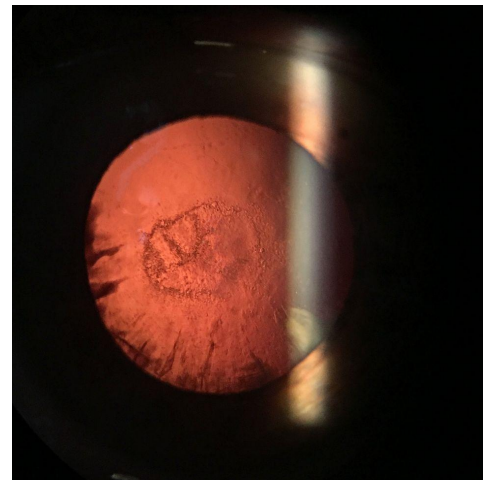
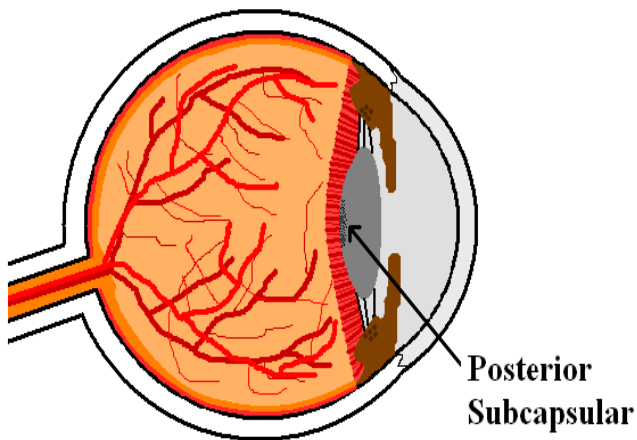


Cataracts not affecting vision are monitored. However, if they are affecting vision, surgery is required to remove them. There are three types of cataracts. They are nuclear sclerosis, posterior subcapsular and cortical cataracts.

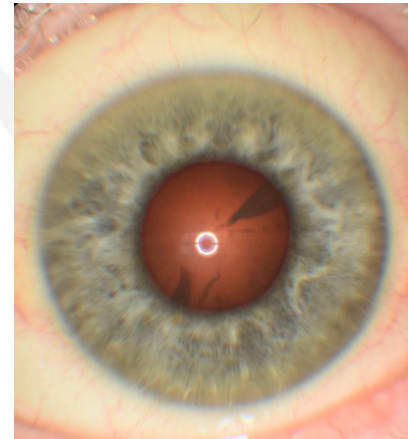
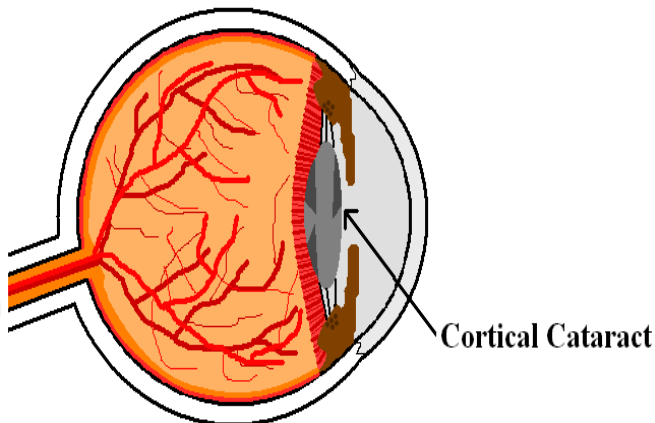
- Nuclear sclerosis is a yellowing/browning of the nucleus of the crystalline lens that happens as we age.



- Posterior subcapsular cataracts develop on the backside of the crystalline lens underneath the exterior capsule



- . Cortical cataracts are cracks or spokes that happen in the cortex of the crystalline lens



## **Signs and Symptoms**

Early cataracts or those outside of the visual axis may not have any symptoms. When cataracts do affect vision, symptoms include blurry vision or a “fog” when looking at the world. Also, getting glare when looking at lights is common and colors may appear less vivid.

## **Causes**

Cataracts become more common as we age. They affect a large portion of the population older than 70 years. Exposure to ultraviolet light, osmotic changes in diabetes and the use of steroids cause some cataracts.

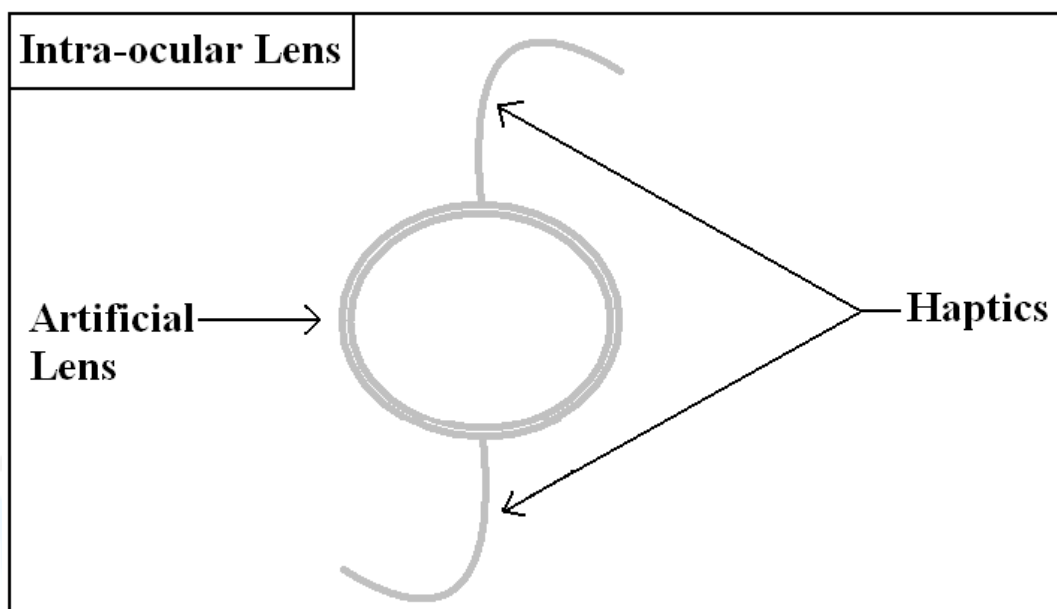
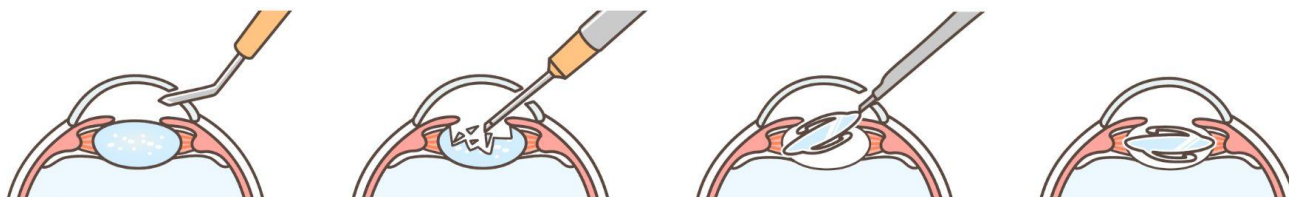
## **Testing & Evaluation**

Evaluating a cataract is done by dilating the pupil and having your eye doctor look with a biomicroscope. Your doctor will take a cross-sectional look at the lens and then view the lens through the red reflex of the retina. Visual acuity is tested to see what impact the cataract has on vision. Glare testing is also done by shining a light at the eye with a cataract and then taking visual acuity to see how bad glare affects it (i.e. looking at lights when driving at night).

## **Management**

If a cataract is not affecting vision or it is not affecting a person’s functional ability, it can be monitored. If a cataract is affecting vision and lifestyle, the only way to cure it is a surgery called a cataract extraction. First probes are put into the eye that makes a circular hole in the anterior portion of the capsule that holds the lens. However, new technology has become available that makes a circular hole in

the capsule and even breaks up the lens prior to removal by an infrared or femtosecond laser. This makes the procedure safer, easier and more precise. Next, a phacoemulsifier breaks up the lens and vacuums it out of the capsule. Once the lens has been removed an artificial intraocular lens (IOL) is placed inside the capsule. An IOL usually has two haptics that hold the lens inside the capsule to keep it centered over the visual axis. New IOLs have come out that can now correct for astigmatism and presbyopia.



## Websites

All About Vision: <http://www.allaboutvision.com/conditions/cataracts.htm>

American Optometric Association:  
<https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/eye-and-vision-conditions/cataract?sso=y>

National Eye Institute:  
<https://www.nei.nih.gov/learn-about-eye-health/eye-conditions-and-diseases/cataracts>