



shop 1 : plattekloof village : cnr plattekloof & baronetcy blvd : plattekloof : 7500 : cape town : south africa
tel +27 21 558 4696 : fax 086 678 5318 : www.nhoptometrist.co.za

Cataract

Over half of people aged over 65 have some cataract development and most cases can be treated successfully with surgery. A cataract is not a skin that grows over the eye but a clouding of part of the eye called the lens. Vision becomes blurred or dim because light cannot pass through the clouded lens to the back of the eye.

What causes a cataract?

Cataracts can form at any age, but most often are a natural consequence of getting older. They develop slowly and are painless. In younger people they can result from an injury, taking certain medication, long-standing inflammation, or illnesses such as diabetes.

What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms may include the following complaints:

'I'm not seeing as well as I used to'

You may notice that your vision is blurred, or that your spectacle lenses seem dirty or scratched.

'I sometimes see double'

The cloudiness in the lens may occur in more than one place, causing a double image.

'My vision is poor in bright light'

Bright light or very sunny days may make it more difficult to see.

'I've noticed a change in colours'

As the cataract develops, its centre becomes more and more yellow, giving everything you see a yellowish tinge.

Reference:

The College of Optometrists, the professional, scientific and examining body for optometry in the UK. People who are our members agree to meet the highest clinical and ethical standards. Look for the letters MCOptom to see if your optometrist is a member.



shop 1 : plattekloof village : cnr plattekloof & baronetsy blvd : plattekloof : 7500 : cape town : south africa
tel +27 21 558 4696 : fax 086 678 5318 : www.nhoptometrist.co.za

Experiencing these symptoms can also be a sign of other eye problems so it is important to consult your optometrist for an eye examination.

Reference:

The College of Optometrists, the professional, scientific and examining body for optometry in the UK. People who are our members agree to meet the highest clinical and ethical standards. Look for the letters MCOptom to see if your optometrist is a member.



shop 1 : plattekloof village : cnr plattekloof & baronetcy blvd : plattekloof : 7500 : cape town : south africa
tel +27 21 558 4696 : fax 086 678 5318 : www.nhoptometrist.co.za

What can be done?

Early cataracts often make you more short-sighted, which in the early stages can be compensated for by altering the prescription of your spectacles. Tinted lenses or shielding your eyes from the sun may also help. However, the benefit is usually only short-lived as the cataract continues to progress and the symptoms increase. At this stage the most effective treatment for cataracts is a simple operation to remove the cloudy lens. Your optometrist will advise you when you need to be referred to an eye surgeon (ophthalmologist).

Cataract surgery is one of the most common surgical procedures and in most cases can be carried out under local anaesthetic on a day-case basis, without an overnight stay in hospital. Diets or drugs have not been shown to slow or stop the development of cataracts.

When should I consider having cataract surgery?

The simple answer is when you are noticing persistent problems with troublesome visual symptoms. It is an entirely individual decision depending upon the visual demands of your particular lifestyle; whether you are a keen reader, use computer screens a lot, need to drive and retain your licence etc. There are no universal or objective criteria. You alone are the best judge of whether or not you are having problems and how tolerable they are.

Once you have been referred to the ophthalmologist (eye surgeon) they will examine your eyes in detail in order to exclude any other eye disease that may or may not be a cause of your symptoms. It is also their duty to tell you the risks and benefits of cataract surgery so that you can make an informed choice as to whether or not you wish to proceed. It is important that you also have a clear idea of the realistic benefits of surgery as well as the risks.

Reference:

The College of Optometrists, the professional, scientific and examining body for optometry in the UK. People who are our members agree to meet the highest clinical and ethical standards. Look for the letters MCOptom to see if your optometrist is a member.