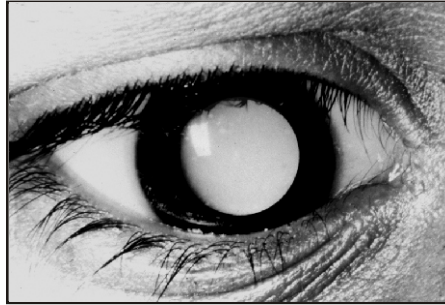
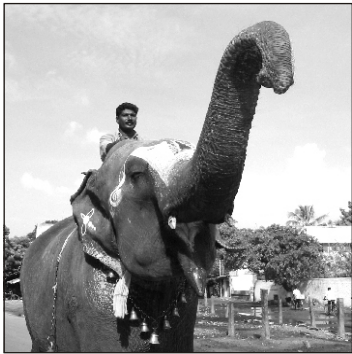


What is cataract?

Normally, the lens of the eye is clear and allows light rays to pass through easily. When a cataract develops the lens becomes cloudy and opaque, and no longer transmits light. This results in gradual decrease in vision



The clear lens in the eye focuses light rays on the retina to get clear vision



The clear image seen through a clear lens...

As cataract develops, it prevents light rays from getting focussed on the retina



...the blurred image seen through a cataractous lens

- Cataract is not a new growth or a film over the eye. In most cases it is just part of the aging process.
- It is not contagious.

Types of cataract

There are many types of cataracts. A change in the chemical composition of the lens causes most cataracts.

The following are the various types of cataract:

Senile cataract

This is the most common type, comprising 80 percent of the total cataracts. It occurs in patients above the age of 50.

Congenital cataract

Cataract in children are rare. They can be caused by an infection of the mother during pregnancy, or they may be hereditary.

Traumatic cataract

Eye injuries can cause cataract in patients of any age. A hard blow, a puncture, a cut, intense heat or a chemical burn can damage the lens and lead to cataract formation.

Secondary cataract

Eye diseases, such as glaucoma, iritis, eye tumors and diabetes may lead to cataract.

Drug-induced cataract

Prolonged treatment with steroid drugs, either local (e.g., allergic conjunctivitis) or systemic (e.g., asthma) can sometimes lead to cataract formation.

Symptoms

- Blurring or dimness of vision
- Feeling of a film over the eyes
- Sensitivity to light and glare
- Double vision
- Change in colour of pupil

Treatment

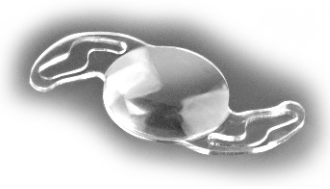
Removal of the clouded lens by surgery is the only treatment. No medication or change of glasses will improve vision.

A cataract operation is a small operation done with local anaesthesia. A 10mm incision is made in the eye. The cataract is removed and it may be replaced either by intraocular lens (IOL) or cataract eye glasses. The incision is then closed with sutures. The entire procedure takes only about 15 minutes.

There are certain disadvantages in wearing regular cataract glasses. For eg. The glasses are heavy, images are seen bigger than real, restricted field of vision etc. To overcome this, intraocular lens is implanted in the eye during cataract surgery.

Intraocular lens implantation

IOL is a tiny transparent convex lens, made of polymethyl methacrylate (a harmless plastic substance) inserted in the eye during surgery. Unlike contact lenses, an intraocular lens stays permanently in the eye and does not cause any irritation. They do not move with change in the posture.



IOL lens

Advantages of IOL

- Since the lens is placed inside the eye, the patient need not wear heavy glasses for distant vision.
- Images are clear and of the same dimension without distortion.
- Complete vision is obtained very early.
- Glasses for near vision are needed even after placing an IOL.



ARAVIND EYE HOSPITALS
& POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF OPHTHALMOLOGY

Aravind - Madurai
1, Anna Nagar, Madurai - 625 020

Aravind - Theni
Periakulam Road, Theni - 625 531

Aravind - Tirunelveli
Swamy Nellaiappan High Road, Tirunelveli Jn.- 627 001

Aravind - Coimbatore
Avinashi Road, Coimbatore - 641 014

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