

Cataract Surgery



When the lens in your eye has become cloudy (known as a “cataract”) it can affect your vision. We perform microsurgery to remove this lens and implant a clear synthetic replacement. This surgery has both risks and benefits. Please read and discuss this information sheet with your surgeon, our staff and your friends and family.

The day of your surgery

As the surgery is likely to be under local anaesthetic, unless discussed with us prior, feel free to eat and drink as usual although just a light meal is best within 2 hours before surgery. If you wish to have sedation please contact our secretary well before the surgery. Please arrange for family or friends to bring you in and take you home allowing up to 2 hours at the theatre. Do not apply makeup as we must clean around your eye. Wear comfy clothing. You will be welcomed by our staff, who will then use eye drops to numb your eye and dilate your pupil before the surgery. After the surgery, the postoperative care of your eyes will be discussed again. Please ensure you know about the postoperative drops and your appointments before you leave.

Your operation

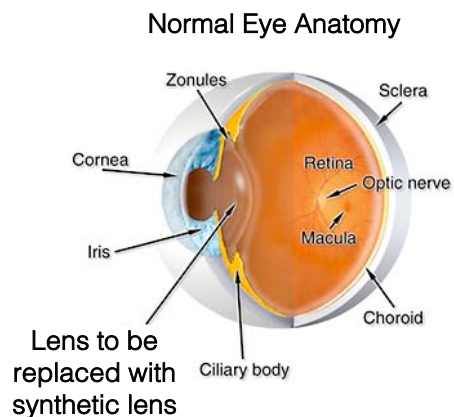
We will help you onto the operating bed and be by your side throughout the surgery. The surgery itself takes around 20-30 mins and is comfortable. We do not start by using any needles around your eye. There is a bright light to look into which your eye quickly adapts to and your eyelids are held open for you. The eye feels comfortable throughout the operation and may frequently be given drops to keep the surface clear. People often see colours during the surgery but you will not see anything in detail. At the end we will tape a clear shield over your eye to temporarily protect it.

What to expect after your surgery

Our staff will offer you a drink and discuss the care of your eye once you leave the operating theatre. The eye shield is best left on overnight; please remove it before your post-operative check the next day. However, we ask that you lift it briefly to start the postoperative eyedrops within 2 hours following the surgery.

The vision usually recovers quickly after surgery but may be hazy initially, improving over several days. Some people see shimmering, a dark shadow to the side, or the occasional flash of light at night, these are common and you will usually stop seeing these after a few days; please ask for advice if you are concerned.

The eye may initially look red after surgery; this is no more serious than a bruise and recovers within 2-3 weeks. Often the eye will feel gritty, and you can use additional artificial tear drops if you feel the need. Paracetamol for pain relief should be all that is required.



Eye drops after your surgery

Eye drops are an essential part of your recovery. We usually use Pred Forte anti-inflammatory eyedrops four times daily for 4 weeks after surgery. **Shake the bottle** and start these around 2 hours after your surgery then at mealtimes and once before bed. Lift up the shield, tilt your head back, place a drop on the inside corner of your eye or inside of the lower eyelid, and close your eye for several minutes. Please continue to use any previous regular eye drops as before, e.g. dry eye or glaucoma drops but start fresh bottle(s). Leave 5 minutes between eyedrops to avoid washing out the eye medicine.



Activities after your surgery

Some people feel a little tired for a few days afterwards, and it is best to arrange for a quiet week after surgery.

Please **do**:

- resume normal activities (including showering and shampooing) and regular household tasks
- reading, television and computers will be fine as comfort allows

Please **don't**:

- put yourself at risk of direct injury to your eye e.g. from a finger, spectacles, a branch, cupboard doors and so on
- press or rub your eye
- excessive straining (eg lifting very heavy objects) or swimming for two weeks

Use sunglasses or clip on sunshades as necessary for glare; the eye will be sensitive to bright light. Your fitness to drive depends on the sight in both eyes and can be resumed once we agree you see well enough and you feel confident.

Your new intraocular lens

The new lens inside your eye, made of soft foldable plastic, is designed to give you life-long quality vision. The type of lens to be used, and the intended focusing of the eye after surgery, will be discussed with you beforehand by your surgeon to best suit your activities and expectations.

Changing spectacles after your surgery

Vision can be fine-tuned with spectacles after cataract surgery, for near and distance. If you are having cataract surgery to both eyes but not on the same day, there may be some temporary imbalance between your eyes. This will be discussed with you preoperatively. A new spectacle prescription for the operated eye is more accurate if measured at least 5 weeks after your surgery as your eye changes while it is healing.

When you should seek help

If you have discomfort in or around the eye within the first 24 hours after surgery, take 2 Paracetamol tablets. Remember, some grittiness is usual. Otherwise,

- If there is persistent pain in the eye, or
- If the eye is red and sticky, or
- If the vision deteriorates or blurs

then you should call Nelson Eye Surgeons; or, after hours, your own surgeon, through the Nelson Hospital operator. If you cannot contact us, contact your GP or the hospital Emergency Department. We would rather you call for reassurance if you are in doubt; although serious eye infections are very rare they do occur and urgent treatment offers the best chance of a good outcome.

- **Nelson Eye Surgeons (03) 545 7900**
- **Nelson Public Hospital: (03) 546 1800**
- **Buller Hospital: (03) 788 9030**