

# Cataract Awareness

About 20.5 million Americans age 40 and older have cataracts. More than half of all Americans develop cataracts by age 80.

Cataracts cloud the eye's clear lens, similar to a window that is "fogged" with steam. When the lens becomes cloudy, light rays cannot pass through it easily and vision becomes blurry. Cataracts are not a growth or a film over the eye.

Cataracts start out mildly and have little effect on vision at first. But as the cataract becomes denser, so does the impact on vision. See your Eye M.D. if you experience:

- Painless blurring of vision;
- Sensitivity to light and glare;
- Double vision in one eye;
- Poor night vision;
- Fading or yellowing of colors;
- Frequent changes in glasses or contact lens prescriptions.

Although cataracts usually develop as part of the aging process, they can also result from:

- Eye injuries;
- Certain diseases, such as diabetes;
- Genetic inheritance;
- Certain medications;
- Frequent, unprotected exposure to UV-A and UV-B rays;
- Smoking.

Currently, there are no medications or exercises that will help cataracts to disappear. However, if cataracts don't interfere with your life, you may choose not to do anything about them.

**Cataracts are the leading cause of blindness worldwide**



When they do begin to interfere with daily activities, they can be treated surgically. Cataract surgery is one of the safest and most frequently performed surgeries in the United States, with more than 1.6 million surgeries performed each year. After surgery, vision is improved in most patients. Laser treatment is sometimes used after cataract surgery to remove a film that can occasionally grow behind the lens implant.

Remember, cataracts are detected through a comprehensive eye exam. Early treatment may save your sight.

**See your Eye M.D....**

*The M.D. makes a difference.*

# MD