Having a cataract operation

The operation will help you see more clearly

Lots of people have cataract operations

The cloudy lens in your eye is replaced by a clear lens

The new lens looks like this

There is a film and other easy read factsheets to help you understand about cataracts and choosing to have an operation

‘Leanne’s cataract surgery’ film

‘What is a cataract?’ factsheet

‘Consent and capacity’ factsheet

The film and the factsheets are on the SeeAbility website. Go to:

You need to go to hospital twice to have your cataract operation

The first visit is for a check up

The second visit is for the operation a few weeks later

Most people will go home on the same day after their cataract operation

You and your supporters can ask for help

Many hospitals have Learning Disability Liaison Nurses

Some hospitals have Eye Clinic Liaison Officers

These people can help you get ready for your operation
The first hospital visit – your check up

You will be sent a letter telling you the date of your check up at the eye clinic.

Go to your check up with a supporter who knows you well. Take your glasses if you have any. Take any information about your health and your past eye health.

The eye doctor will look at your cataracts.

The nurse will check your blood pressure.

The nurse and the eye doctor will talk to you about your cataract operation.

You and your supporter can ask questions.

The eye doctor will tell you the date for the operation which will be in a few weeks time.
You and your supporters should plan the help you will need

You may need help before, during and after your operation

We have a form called an Eye Surgery Support Plan

You can use this form to plan the help you need. You can download the form at:

www.seeability.org/eye-surgery-support-plan

Your plan will also help doctors and nurses understand how you communicate and will tell them any other important information about you

Before the operation, you can ask to visit the eye clinic or look at pictures of the eye clinic

This will help you to get to know the faces, voices and names of the people you will meet when you have the operation
After the operation you will wear an eye shield. You can practise having someone cover your eye with an eye patch.

After the operation your eyes might be sensitive to light. You might find it very bright. Practise wearing sunglasses and a sun hat.

You should try not to touch or rub your eyes.

You may need a plan to help you stop doing this.

The second hospital visit – your operation

You need someone who knows you well to go with you on the day of the operation.

At the eye clinic you will meet the nurse. The nurse will talk to you about what will happen.
The nurse will check your blood pressure again

Before your operation you will have eye drops

This will make your eye numb. This means you don’t feel any pain

You may be taken to have your operation on a hospital trolley bed

Some people might have an anaesthetic to make them sleep during the operation

The operation will take place in an operating theatre

During the operation the eye doctor will take the cataract out of your eye and put a clear lens in
The operation doesn’t hurt

The operation takes about 30 minutes

After your operation

After the operation you will have a plastic shield to cover your eye

You will need to stay in the hospital for a few hours

This is so the nurses can check you are okay

The feeling will come back to your eye after a few hours

After the operation your eye might feel sore or bruised but this feeling will go away in a day or two
You and your supporters need to follow the advice given by your eye doctor and nurse.

They will tell you when it is okay to take the plastic shield off your eye.

You will need to have drops in your eyes for a few weeks after the operation.

You will need to have plans in place for drops to be given to you.

Some people find it hard to take eye drops.

You can ask your eye doctor about having a special injection or ointment instead.

You may need to rest for a few days after the operation.

You should not swim or do sport.
Before the operation, your eyesight may be blurred or unclear

You may see things more clearly soon after the operation. Sometimes it can take longer to notice this.

Things may also look brighter.

You may need to wear sunglasses or a sun hat for a few days after the operation.

You may need support to stop you rubbing or touching your eyes after your operation.

You will have a check up with the eye doctor a few weeks after the operation.

You will probably need new glasses after the operation.

The eye doctor will tell you when you should go to the opticians.
If you have cataracts in both eyes you will usually have one eye operated on at a time.

It may be a few months before you have the other eye operated on.

**Remember** - you don’t have to live with cataracts and vision that is not clear.

An operation will help you see more clearly.

We would like to thank Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust for their kind support and co-operation in helping us to make this factsheet.

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Twitter: @seeability

Youtube: www.youtube.com/SeeAbilityFilms

eyecare@seeability.org

01372 755000

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