

## What is A Cataract?

◆ A cataract is a clouding of the natural lens of the eye. The lens is responsible for focusing light and producing clear, sharp images. The development of cataracts is a normal part of the aging process. Cataracts can also develop from an eye injury or from the use of certain medications.

## How do I Know if I have Cataracts?

◆ The common symptoms of cataracts include blurred vision, sensitivity to light and glare, reduced vision in bright lights, halos around lights, frequent eye-glass prescription changes and needing bright lights while reading.

## How is a Cataract Diagnosed?

◆ Your eye doctor will perform a thorough examination of your eyes. Your pupils may be dilated and a slit lamp will enable the physician to evaluate your natural lens for cataract formation. Most cataracts develop gradually over

the years and the decision to proceed with cataract surgery is made by the patient. Surgical removal of a cataract is recommended when the vision problems begin to interfere with a patient's activities of daily living.

## Microsurgical Techniques

◆ Cataract surgery has improved significantly due to advances in techniques and technology. Over 98% of patients achieve improved vision following surgery. Today, the surgery is an outpatient procedure, utilizing a clear cornea incision and phacoemulsification with no needle and no stitches. Phacoemulsification is a technique in which a small ultrasonic probe is used to break the cataract into very tiny pieces allowing it to be gently vacuumed from the eye. A short acting IV sedation and a topical anesthesia are usually all that are necessary to keep the patient comfortable and pain free during the surgery. A small foldable intraocular lens is inserted through the incision, usually less than 3 mil-

limeters, and is unfolded in place of the natural lens. Most patients are able to have a "self sealing" incision and no sutures are required.

## What to Expect After Surgery

◆ Most people experience no pain following the surgery. Patients use drops for a few weeks after the surgery and most activities are allowed.

## Will I Need Glasses After Surgery?

◆ Most people require some glasses correction after surgery. Current technology, including the use of the IOL Master and newer multi-focal intraocular lenses, significantly reduces a patient's dependency on glasses. Glasses may still be required for reading vision or distance vision, depending on the prescription of the glasses the patient wore prior to surgery.