



## Advances in Cataract Surgery

Modern cataract surgery makes use of an array of high-tech equipment and techniques as well as precise surgical skills. Gone are the days when cataract surgery required a two-week stay in the hospital, with your head immobilized with sandbags until you healed. Today's cataract surgery is a short outpatient procedure. You usually get back to your normal activity level within a few days. One of the most dramatic advances in cataract surgery involves anesthesia for the procedure. Long ago, patients were put to sleep for cataract surgery. Today, a topical anesthesia is used for the surgery while you receive sedation by IV to help you be relaxed and comfortable during the procedure.

The technique of cataract removal also has undergone major improvements. In the past, the cataract was removed whole through an incision over a half-inch long. Modern cataract surgery is performed through an incision less than an eighth of an inch long. A small instrument is inserted through this tiny incision and is used to break the cataract into many small pieces that are removed without the need for a large incision. There are many advantages to a smaller incision, including a faster recovery time, less discomfort, and a smaller risk of infection after surgery. In addition, while the old incision required many stitches to close up, modern cataract surgery can often be performed without any stitches, or with one stitch at most.

During cataract surgery, the cloudy lens of your eye is removed and replaced with a clear lens implant. In the old days, there were no implants, and patients had to wear thick glasses ("Coke-bottle glasses") after surgery to see well. Now there are implants that are placed directly into the eye, reducing the need for glasses after surgery.

Antibiotic advancements also benefit patients undergoing cataract surgery. Cataract surgery is among the most successful operations in all of medicine, but complications can occasionally occur. One of the most severe complications is an infection in the eye called endophthalmitis. To reduce your risk of getting endophthalmitis, your doctor will prescribe antibiotic eye drops to use around the time of your surgery.

Because of the aging population and how well cataract surgery is tolerated, it has become the most common surgery performed on adults in the United States. As a result of our surgeons' expertise and the many high-tech developments in all aspects of cataract surgery, the operation is highly successful and has a greater value to patients than ever before.



*Today's cataract surgery is an outpatient procedure and lets you get back to your normal activity level within a few days.*

— Credits: Information provided by Eye Care Insight