

Cataract Awareness Month: Insights to Help Your Vision

BY SAMUEL BOLES, M.D.
BOARD CERTIFIED OPHTHALMOLOGIST
ANNE ARUNDEL EYE CENTER

Did you know that almost half of adults will develop cataracts by age 80 and that cataracts are the leading cause of visual loss in adults 65 and older? Since August is Cataract Awareness Month, now is a good time to learn more about the symptoms of cataracts and how regular eye exams will help prevent or treat early signs of one of the most curable causes of vision loss.

What is a Cataract?

A cataract is clouding of the natural lens of the eye, usually caused by age. I like to compare it to the clear plastic window on a convertible car. After years of exposure to sun and weather, the plastic becomes yellow and cloudy. With surgery, we remove the old window (the lens) and replace it with a new, clear, synthetic one.

What are the Symptoms?

- blurry sight and sometimes double vision
- halos and glare—the eyes become dazzled by bright light, making night driving difficult
- colors may become faded
- frequent changes in glasses prescriptions

Considering Surgery?

The first thing I would ask is, “is surgery absolutely necessary?” Usually, cataract surgery is elective. The patient can and should wait until symptoms are bothersome because cataracts do not harm the overall health of the eye. The good news is that cataract surgery has the highest success rate of any surgery practiced today, with less than a 2 percentage of post-op complications and a very high rate of patient satisfaction.

How Long Does it Take?

The procedure itself takes about 10 minutes. This may vary depending on the surgeon. My patients are usually at the surgical center for about 1 ½ hours, including pre- and post-op preparations. It is to the patient's advantage to have the eye




exposed for the shortest amount of time with the surgeon making minimal small movements. Both precision and efficiency are required for the best results and fastest healing.

How about Driving?

Most people will have the operation, go home on

the same day, and resume normal activities almost immediately. Most of my patients are back to driving in a just a few days.

Some Final Thoughts.

Something that may seem obvious but that many people forget is that prevention is extremely important! Have your eyes checked regularly! A simple eye exam does not commit you to having surgery if cataracts are diagnosed. Many eye conditions that can become problematic are easily diagnosable and treatable with regular eye exams. 

A Board Certified Ophthalmologist, Dr. Boles is considered one of Maryland's top surgeons with a subspecialty in cataract and glaucoma disease. Voted by his peers as Top Doc in 2009, Dr. Boles is founder and Medical Director of Anne Arundel Eye Center, a state-of-the-art treatment center offering complete ophthalmic exams as well as diagnostic pre- and post-surgical eye care. To learn more, visit www.eyecenter2010.com.

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