

DIRECT CATARACT REFERRAL



WHAT IS A CATARACT?

A cataract is a clouding of the crystalline lens in your eye which can lead to a reduction in your vision.

Cataracts develop in all eyes as people get older. It is not possible to predict with certainty how quickly or to what extent a cataract may develop, so we often monitor them at your routine eye examination. In some cases cataracts develop to such an extent they can cause blurring or glare making it difficult to carry out every day tasks, such as driving or reading. It is at this point that we would recommend we carry out a cataract assessment.

Cataracts are more common if you smoke, if you have high blood pressure or if you suffer from diabetes. Some tablets such as steroids may increase the speed at which cataracts develop. A cataract will not damage your eye in any way and it can be operated on safely at any time.

CATARACT ASSESSMENT

If during your routine eye examination it is found that your cataracts are causing you difficulty then we will generally recommend a cataract assessment. This is a separate appointment where we will assess your cataract in more detail. We will use drops to enlarge your pupil which gives us a good view of the cataract and the back of your eye. These drops can last for up to 6-12 hours and you cannot drive until the effect of the drops has subsided. This appointment is paid for by your local NHS PCT and is available to all residents of Cambridgeshire NHS Care Trust. However if you wish to be treated privately (BUPA) you will need to pay us directly for this appointment.

SHOULD I HAVE SURGERY?

It is important to understand that the fact that you have some cataract does not necessarily mean that you need to have a cataract operation.

The symptoms of cataract may be eased by using sunglasses, wearing a large rimmed hat, or updating your prescription. We will advise you of the best way to limit the effects of your cataracts if surgery is not appropriate.

The time to have a cataract operation is when you feel your vision is causing enough daily problems to accept the small risk that is involved in the surgery.

WHERE CAN I HAVE SURGERY?

You can choose which NHS provider carries out your cataract operation. You may choose between Addenbrookes, Hinchingsbrooke and West Suffolk hospitals; generally people choose the location closest to their home or family.

WHAT DOES A CATARACT OPERATION INVOLVE?

The purpose of the operation is to remove and replace the cloudy lens (cataract) with a plastic implant lens. Most surgery will be performed under local anaesthetic, which means you will not need to stay overnight and you will be awake. During the surgery you need to be able to lie flat and relatively still for 20- 30 minutes which is the average length of time the surgery takes.

During the surgery you will not be able to see what is happening, but you will be aware of a bright light. Drops are used to enlarge your pupil. The area around your eye is washed and cleansed and a plastic shield protects the rest of your face.

The surgeon will start by making two small self healing cuts, and will start by softening the cataract with sound waves. Once broken into small fragments the cataract is removed via a small tube.

Finally the artificial lens implant is inserted rolled up, it is then unrolled, positioned and the procedure is complete. You will not feel or see the new artificial lens.

You will be given some eye drops to reduce the risk of infection to use over a number of weeks after your surgery. Generally within a week you will notice the improvement in your vision, but it generally takes 4-6 weeks for your vision to settle. Following surgery, you will need reading glasses. In many cases distance vision will be good but you may require a prescription to enhance it further.



Cataract Accredited Optometrists

ANDREA J. CLAMP
BSC. (HONS.) MCOPTOM

DANIEL J. HARDIMAN-MCCARTNEY
BSC. (HONS.) MCOPTOM

7 St Andrew's Street, Cambridge, CB2 3AX

Tel: +44 (0)1223 350043

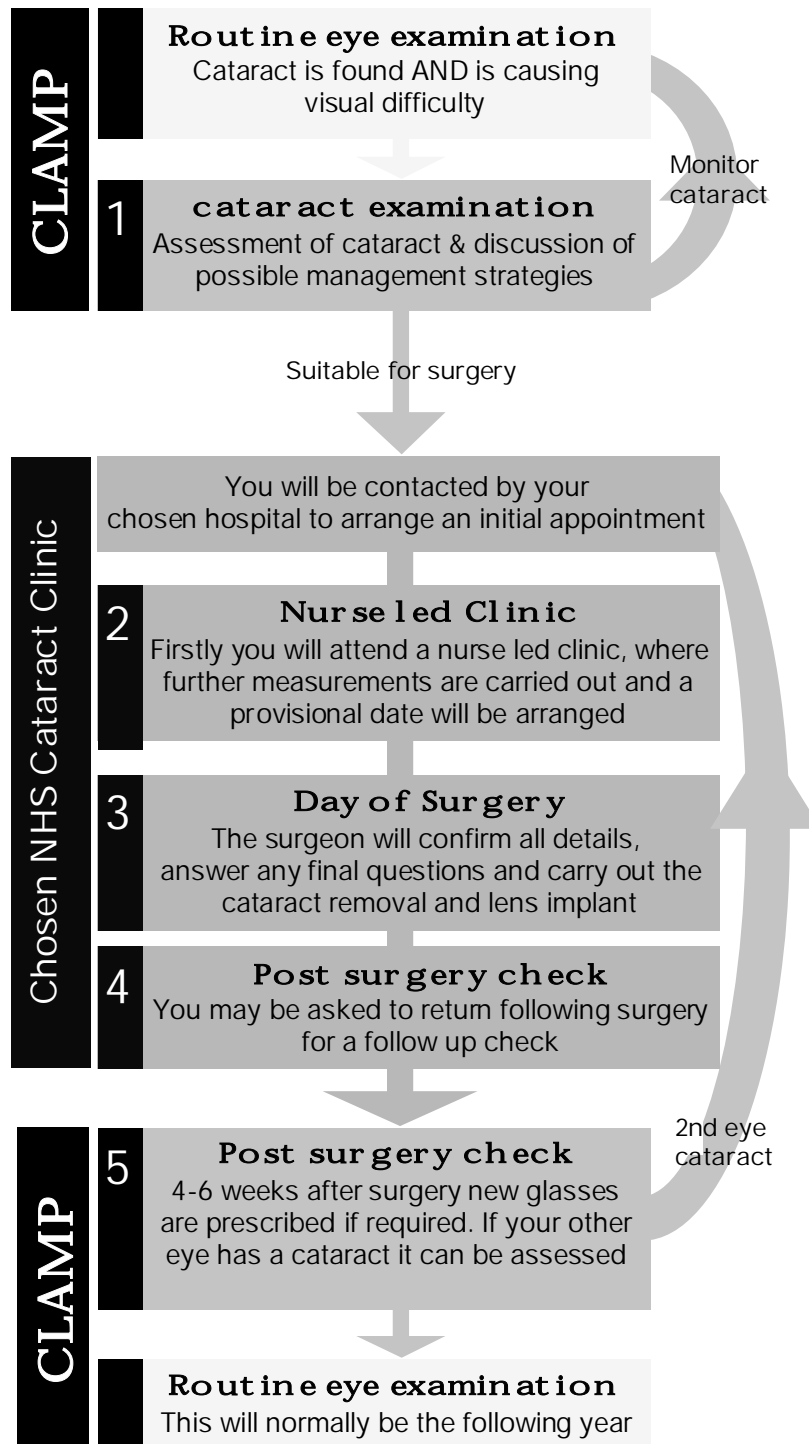
Fax: +44 (0)1223 308976

7 St Andrew's Street, Cambridge CB2 3AX

Email: info@clampoptometrists.com

A high contrast version of this form is available online from
www.clampoptometrists.com

Care Pathway



NHS cataract clinic options
Addenbrookes, Cambridge
Hinchingbrooke, Huntingdon
West Suffolk, Bury St Edmunds

You will have your surgery within 3 months of being referred from your cataract examination.