

## **Surgery a must for Cataract**

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Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in India. It presents usually after 45 years of age and is considered as a problem of ageing. Almost 11 million cases are there in India. The unfortunate aspect of cataract blindness is that it is reversible by surgery but lack of surgical facilities in the rural areas has resulted in the backlog of patients needing cataract surgery.

The Human crystalline lens, which is clear and transparent, is part of the focusing mechanism of the eye. With the age, the lens becomes cloudy and opaque, thereby hampering normal vision. Any opacity in the crystalline lens, which leads to decreased vision, is called "CATARACT" or "SAFED MOTIA"

Ageing is the most common cause. With age, proteins of the eye lens get altered and opacified leading to cataract. Other causes include congenital and developmental anomalies, trauma, inflammation of the eye, metabolic disease like Diabetes, hypothyroidism, Drug induced cataract usually due to prolonged use of steroids etc.

### **The common symptoms of cataract**

Cataract makes simple tasks difficult and in some cases impossible to perform. This happens on account of:

- Cloudy or Blurred vision
- Change in one's perception of colors
- Sensitivity to bright lamps or sunlight
- Poor night vision
- Difficulty in driving especially at night
- Frequent changes in eyeglass prescription

### **Treatment options**

In the absence of any proven medical cure, surgery is the only course of treatment for cataract. The two common surgical options available for cataract surgery are:

#### **1. Conventional Cataract surgery or Extra Capsular Cataract Extraction [ECCE]**

- Requires an incision of 10-12mm.
- The cloudy eye lens is removed in one piece
- A hard plastic lens is implanted
- Multiple Stitches are required
- Final glass prescription could take even up to 10 weeks.

## **2. Microincision Cataract surgery [PHACOEMULSIFICATION]**

- Requires a very small incision of 3 mm.
- Cataract Extraction with Phacoemulsification and foldable lens implant
- Walk-in Walk-out procedure
- Stitchless, bloodless, painless surgery
- Chances of infection very low
- Minimum post surgery precautions
- Quicker healing and recovery

### **When to go for cataract removal?**

Cataract should be removed as soon as it begins to affect daily activities.

With any of the mentioned symptoms setting in, it is the right time to go for cataract removal. **DO NOT WAIT FOR THE CATARACT TO GET MATURE** as unnecessary delay can lead to complications and a more difficult surgery. Cataract surgery can be undertaken successfully in any season. Summers or rainy season have absolutely no effect on the outcome of the cataract surgery.

### **Recommended treatment**

With Phacoemulsification and implantation of foldable intraocular (IOL), treatment of cataract has become very sophisticated yet simple . The procedure is safe, accurate and leads to rapid recovery. Thus, Phacoemulsification with foldable lens implant is the most recommended treatment for cataract.

In Phacoemulsification , ultrasound power is used to break the hard cataract into multiple pieces, which are then sucked out through a small 3.2mm incision. A foldable lens (IOL) of the required power is then implanted.

These foldable lens implants are made of a soft flexible material. The soft and flexible material allows the lens implant to be folded for insertion through a 3.2mm micro incision. Once in place, the lens unfolds to its regular size of 6mm.

Whatever the cause of cataract its management remains surgery with IOL implantation.

The forthcoming article shall elaborate the advantages of Phacoemulsification over the conventional techniques and shall answer all the frequently asked questions related to the subject.

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