

Cataract surgery: the latest technique

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Phacoemulsification is the latest technique of cataract surgery in practice. Cataract surgery has now-a-days become a walk- in walk- out procedure with this technique.

In phacoemulsification, ultrasound energy 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 required power is then implanted in place of the natural lens thus removed.

What are the advantages of Phacoemulsification with foldable IOL over conventional cataract surgery?

- It allows for a stitchless, painless, no bandage surgery.
- Early visual rehabilitation for the patient.
- Minimum curvatural changes occur in the eye following surgery.
- Final glasses can be prescribed within three weeks.
- Post surgery, the wound is very secure.
- Drops of local anesthetic agent used instead of an injection in the eye, thus leading to walk-in walk-out Procedure.

There are several routinely asked queries that need to be answered before a cataract patient goes in for a phacoemulsification surgery

How long the surgery does takes?

Phacoemulsification takes about 10-15 minutes per eye.

Any preoperative care needed?

Antibiotic drops are started before cataract surgery. Any specific systemic problem one should discuss with your surgeon before planning for surgery.

How soon after phaco surgery, will I be able to see clearly?

In some cases, the patient is able to see almost immediately following the surgery, although most patients experience clear vision after two or three days.

Will I need glasses after phaco surgery?

You may need to wear glasses only to fine- tune your vision.

These spectacles have normal lenses unlike thick lenses used in the past.

If unifocal IOL is used, near vision glasses are always required.

Will activities have to be restricted after phaco surgery?

Normal activities including Walking, reading, writing, watching television etc. can be resumed soon after the surgery. However, during the first week after the surgery, it is better to avoid strenuous activities.

Is there any diet restriction after phaco surgery?

There is absolutely no diet restriction after phaco and you can continue your normal diet. However, diet regulation advised for other diseases like Diabetes, High blood pressure, etc must continue.

Can I have phaco surgery on one eye even if the other eye had been operated upon using the conventional cataract surgery?

Yes, you may have microincision phaco surgery on your “second eye” provided there is no specific contraindication for Phaco.

What should be the time gap between two eye surgeries?

Routinely one month’s gap is preferred, but it can be done at a gap of 3 to 5 days as per the patients comfort.

Can Phaco be done in all cases?

Phaco is usually possible in all routine cases. But in few cases where cataract is hard to cut into pieces, phaco is difficult. Advanced machines like SOVEREIGN are able to manage this. Sovereign is one of the latest generation phacomachine as of now.

What are Multifocal / Bifocal IOLs ?

The latest multifocal/ bifocal IOL are designed to provide good distance vision, intermediate and near vision. They reduce the patient’s dependence on glasses for routine activities. Unlike conventional IOL, multifocal IOL has multiple zones of different focal lengths that bring everything from near to far in clear focus. These lenses provide almost complete freedom from glasses. These lenses are new and clinical trials regards their efficacy are being undertaken the worldover.

Where should one get eye surgery done?

While the above answers take care of your basic information another important aspect that needs to take into consideration is the choice of surgeon and the center for the procedure. You should choose a surgeon who is proficient in phaco surgery as it is a reasonably difficult surgery to master and a centre with the latest phaco technology.

Any advances in cataract surgery?

Bimanual phaco or phacovit is the new technique of cataract surgery where two incisions of 1 mm are sufficient to remove the cataract. Instead of a foldable IOL a rollable IOL that can be inserted through a 1 mm incision is used. It further hastens the post-operative recovery.
