

# Preparing for cataract surgery

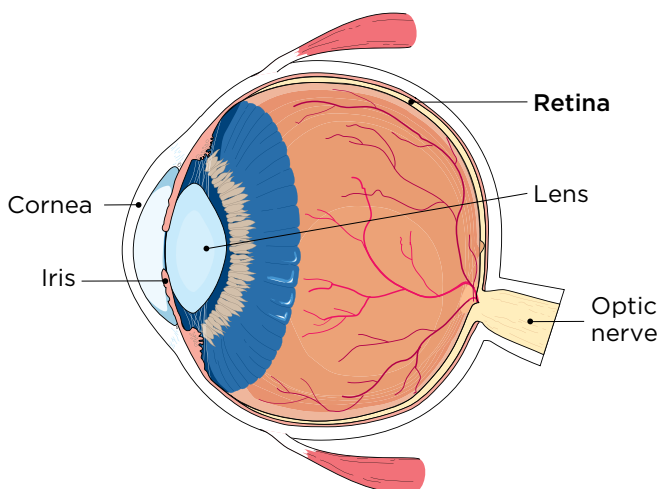


You are about to have surgery on your eye to treat a cataract. This fact sheet is intended to help you better understand this treatment and answer your questions.

## What is a cataract?

Normally, the lens of the eye is transparent. With age, some of components of the lens can become stuck together. This prevents light from passing through properly, and vision becomes worse. This is called a cataract.

Interior of the eye



## How is a cataract treated?

The only treatment possible is surgery to replace the lens with an artificial lens. This improves not only your vision, but also your quality of life.

## When and where will my surgery be done?

This information will be given to you about 10 days before the surgery. Plan on a full day. The surgery itself is not long (20 to 30 minutes). However, you may have to wait.

## Can there be complications?

This surgery usually goes smoothly. As with any surgery, there is a risk of bleeding and infection. But this is rare and can be controlled. There is a risk of vision loss (partial or total) in fewer than 1 in 1,000 cases.

## What should I do BEFORE the surgery?

### In the weeks before the surgery

#### > Come to your preparatory exams

There are several types of lenses. You will discuss the various lens options with your doctor.



### > Plan to bring someone with you

After the surgery, you'll have difficulty getting around alone and won't be able to drive. This is why you should be accompanied:

- on the day of the surgery
- and on the day after the surgery for your follow-up visit with the doctor

If you don't speak French or English, your companion must be able to translate for you. Space in the waiting room is limited: if possible, bring only one person with you.

### > Plan to have help at home

Make sure everything is organized for your return home. You'll need help for the first 24 hours (for example, to cook meals).

### The morning of the surgery

- Take a shower or bath.
- Wear loose clothing that is easy to put on.
- Don't use any face cream, make-up, nail polish, or perfume.
- **If you're on any medications**, take them as usual. If you have eye drops for glaucoma, you can apply them.

### What should I bring to the hospital on the day of the surgery?

- > All medications you take, in their original containers, or a list provided by your pharmacist.
- > Your eye drops, if you have any.
- > If you need to pay for the lens: cash, credit card, or certified cheque.
- > Please leave jewelry and items of value at home.

### What does the surgery involve?

Your eye will be frozen (anesthetized) with drops (no needles). So you'll stay awake and won't feel any pain.

A very small incision will be made in the cornea of the eye. This allows the lens to be removed and replaced by the artificial lens.

Your eye will heal quickly. You will have little or no discomfort.

### How do I take care of myself AFTER the surgery?

Read our health fact sheet [Returning home after cataract surgery](#).

### What should I do if I need to postpone my appointment?

Call the Ophtalmology Clinic right away:

**☎ 514 890-8278, option 1**

Outside of business hours, leave a message.

**If you're ill or have a fever** in the days before the surgery, call the Ophtalmology Clinic. Your appointment may be postponed. This service can also answer your questions **BEFORE** the surgery.



#### USEFUL RESOURCES

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.



You can also find them on our website [chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante](http://chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante)

*The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.*

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