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The Spectacle

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June is Cataract Awareness Month

The Doctor's Corner

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A cataract is a clouding of the lens in the eye that affects vision. Most cataracts are related to aging. Cataracts are very common in older people. By age 80, more than half of all Americans either have a cataract or have had cataract surgery.

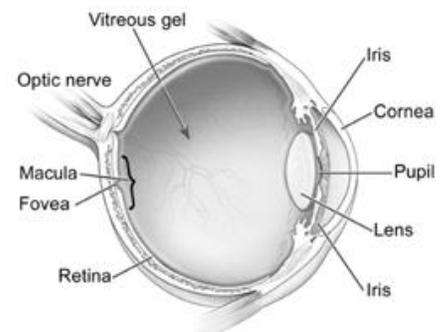
A cataract can occur in either or both eyes. It cannot spread from one eye to the other.

The lens is the clear part of the eye that helps focus light on an image on the retina. The retina is the light-sensitive tissue at the back of the eye.

In a normal eye, light passes through the transparent lens to the retina. Once it reaches the retina, light is changed into nerve signals that are sent to the brain.

The lens must be clear for the retina to receive a sharp image. If the lens is cloudy from a cataract, the image you see will be blurred.

Although most cataracts are related to aging, there are other types of cataracts.



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Did You Know?

You blink more than 17,000 times a day.

One-quarter of all U.S. school children have a vision problem significant enough to affect learning.

June 14th is Flag Day

In the United States Flag Day is celebrated on June 14th. It commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States, which happened that day by resolution of the Second Continental Congress in 1777. The United States Army also celebrates the Army Birthday on this date; Congress adopted “the American continental army” after reaching a consensus position in the Committee of the Whole on June 14th, 1775.

“In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation to officially establish June 14th as Flag Day”

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14th as Flag Day; in August 1949, National Flag Day was established by an Act of Congress.

Flag Day is not an official federal holiday, though on June 14th, 1937, Pennsylvania became the first (and only) U.S. state to celebrate Flag Day as a state holiday, beginning in the town of Rennerdale.

Lab Notes

Will I need glasses after cataract surgery? Is this still necessary?

Nowadays, cataract patients who have intraocular lenses (IOLs) implanted during surgery may need reading glasses for close vision, but that's about it.

In fact, with the newer multifocal and accommodating [IOLs](#), even reading glasses are sometimes unnecessary.

People who don't receive IOLs wear contact lenses for distance vision, with reading glasses for close up. Or if you don't want to fool with contacts you may wear multifocal lenses for all distances. Even though you may have to wear glasses for a slight distance correction and reading help, rarely does anyone have to wear thick eyeglasses anymore. And because your cloudy lens in the eye has been replaced with a new clear one, your vision is incredibly clear.

Fun Facts

Fortune cookies were actually invented in America, not China

Each king in a deck of cards represents a great king from history: Spades – King David; Clubs – Alexander the Great; Hearts – Charlemagne and Diamonds – Julius Caesar.

Only two people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4th, John Hancock and Charles Thomason. Most of the rest signed on August 2nd. Five others signed it sometime later.

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Secondary cataract: Cataracts can form from surgery for other eye problems, such as glaucoma. Cataracts also can develop in people who have other health problems, such as diabetes. Cataracts are sometimes linked to steroid use.

Traumatic cataract: Cataracts can develop after an eye injury, sometimes years later.

Congenital cataract: Some babies are born with cataracts or develop them in childhood, often in both eyes. These cataracts may be so small that they do not affect vision. If they do, the lenses may need to be removed.

Radiation cataract: Cataracts can develop after exposure to some types of radiation.

What causes cataracts?

The lens lies behind the iris and the pupil. It works much like a camera lens. It focuses light onto the retina at the back of the eye, where an image is recorded. The lens also adjusts the eye's focus, letting us see things clearly both up close and far away. The lens is made mostly of water and protein. The protein is arranged in a precise way that keeps the lens clear and lets light pass through it.

But as we age, some of the protein may clump together and start to cloud a small area of the lens. This is a cataract. Over time, the cataract may grow larger and cloud more of the lens, making it harder to see. Researchers suspect that there are several causes of cataract, such as smoking and diabetes. Or, it may be that the protein in the lens just changes from the wear and tear it takes over the years.

Cataracts can affect your vision in two ways: 1. Clumps of protein reduce the sharpness of the image reaching the retina. It clouds the lens and reduces the light that reaches the retina. The clouding may become severe enough to cause blurred vision. 2. The clear lens slowly changes to a yellowish/brownish tint to vision. Over time, increased tinting may make it more difficult to read and perform other routine activities.

The term "age-related" is a little misleading. You don't have to be a senior citizen to get this type of cataract. In fact, people can have an age-related cataract in their 40's and 50's. But during middle age, most cataracts are small and do not effect vision. It is usually after 60 that most cataracts steal vision.

Wearing sunglasses and a hat with a brim to block UV in the sunlight may help to delay cataracts. If you smoke, stop. Researchers also believe good nutrition can help reduce the risk of age-related cataracts. They recommend eating green leafy vegetables, fruit, and other foods with antioxidants.

Source:nie.nih.gov

**** Don't forget Father's Day on Sunday May 17th ****

Calendar of Events

July is UV Safety Month

July 4th is Independence Day

July 22nd is Parent's Day

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