

BEFORE



DURING



A PATIENT GUIDE

Cataract and Cataract Surgery

AFTER



Tomorrow's Eye Care, Today[®]



Singapore National
Eye Centre

SingHealth

This FAQ guide is for you as you have been listed for surgery to remove the cataract from your eye. It aims to answer questions about your surgery – explaining what you can expect before, during and after your cataract surgery.

Patients who are prepared for surgery and who take part in their care can recover in less time and with fewer complications. This booklet will give you the information you need to get yourself, your caregiver and your family ready for surgery.

Please keep this booklet with you to write down any further instructions. Bring it along to all your appointments before and after your surgery, and on the day of your surgery.

***IMPORTANT:** The information in this booklet does not replace the advice or directions provided to you by your ophthalmologist.

If you feel unwell in the week before / on the day of surgery; have a cough, cold or fever; or develop redness or discharge from your eye, please call our Listing Room staff to reschedule your surgery to another date.

Singapore National Eye Centre

Day Ward: (65) 6322 9476 (before 8.30am)

Listing Room: (65) 6227 7657

(during office hours – 8.30am to 5.30pm)



GETTING READY FOR SURGERY

PRE-SURGERY

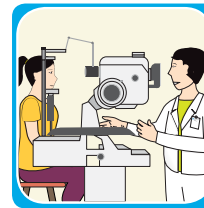
1. How do I prepare for my surgery?

To prepare for your cataract surgery, you may be asked to:

Undergo Pre-operative Tests



Go through a pre-operative assessment to check on your heart (ECG), blood pressure and blood sugar (urine test).



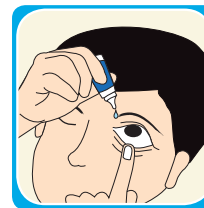
Undergo a biometry test to measure the size and shape of your eye. This helps determine the right type of lens implant (intraocular lens, or IOL).

Stop taking certain medications



Check with your ophthalmologist or nurse if you should take your prescription medications before surgery.











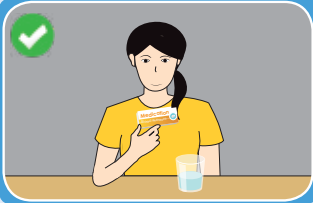

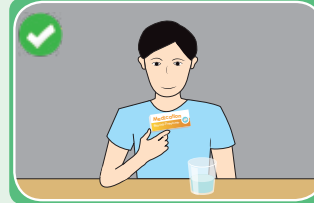
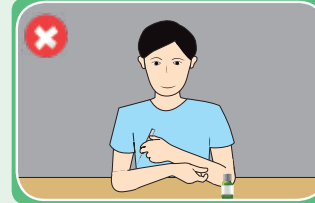

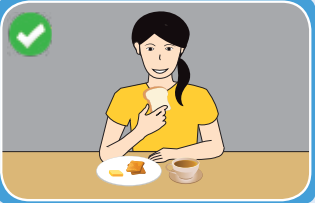
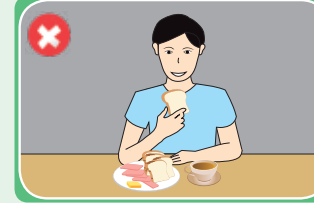
Use eye drops to reduce infection risk



Antibiotic eye drops may be prescribed for use one or two days before the surgery.

2. Do I need to fast before surgery?

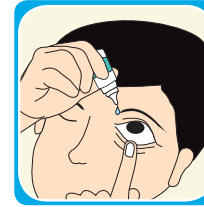
Depending on the time of your surgery, you may be instructed to fast for a specific period of time before surgery. It is important that you follow the set of fasting instructions carefully. For your own safety, if you do not follow the fasting instructions, your operation may have to be postponed to a later date.

	Morning Surgery (Local & General Anaesthesia) <input type="checkbox"/>	Afternoon Surgery (Local Anaesthesia) <input type="checkbox"/>	Afternoon Surgery (General Anaesthesia) <input type="checkbox"/>					
CLEAR LIQUIDS / FLUIDS	<p>From 12 midnight to 4am</p>  <p>Half a glass of plain water</p>	<p>After 4am</p>  <p>No fluids</p>	<p>From 12 midnight to 6am</p>  <p>1 glass of plain water</p>	<p>From 6am to 9am</p>  <p>Half a glass of plain water</p> <p><small>*If you have late surgery, you may take half a glass of plain water 4 hours before scheduled time</small></p>	<p>After 9am</p>  <p>No fluids</p>	<p>From 12 midnight to 6am</p>  <p>1 glass of plain water</p>	<p>From 6am to 9am</p>  <p>Half a glass of plain water</p> <p><small>*If you have late surgery, you may take half a glass of plain water 4 hours before scheduled time</small></p>	<p>After 9am</p>  <p>No fluids</p>
MEDICATIONS	 <p>Blood pressure medication: Yes, take with sips of plain water at 6am</p>	 <p>Diabetes medication: Stop on the day of surgery</p>	 <p>Blood pressure medication: Yes, take with sips of plain water at 6am</p>	 <p>Diabetes medication: Yes, take only HALF DOSE</p>	 <p>Blood pressure medication: Yes, take with sips of plain water at 6am</p>	 <p>Diabetes medication: Stop on the day of surgery</p>		
FOOD	 <p>No food after 12 midnight</p>	 <p>Light breakfast (1 slice of bread or 2 pieces of biscuits by 6am)</p>	 <p>No breakfast</p>					

ON SURGERY DAY

REGISTRATION AND DURING SURGERY

1. On the day of surgery, what should I do before leaving home?



Your surgeon may recommend that you instil dilating eye drops (Tropicamide 1%) – **3 drops with a 10-minute interval between the drops** – before leaving home for surgery. This is to widen (dilate) the pupil of your eye to allow your surgeon to perform the surgery. The dilating eye drops will affect your near vision, i.e., your vision will be blurred for about 4-6 hours.

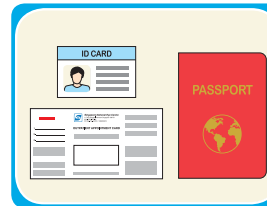
E.g. If you are leaving home at 9am, instil the 1st eye drop at 8.30am, the 2nd drop at 8.40am and the last drop at 8.50am.



You are advised not to drive. Have someone to accompany you to SNEC for your surgery.

2. What should I bring on surgery day?

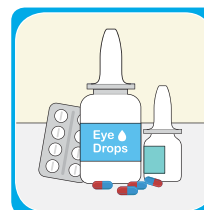
Bring along the Day Surgery Guide folder, deposit / LOG (if any) and the following original documents:



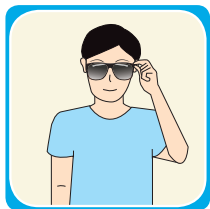
- Appointment card
- Identity card (NRIC) / Passport / Birth certificate
- Medisave form
- Deposit / Letter of Guarantee (LOG)* if any

*If your company is paying for your surgery bills, please email your LOG to SNEC Business Office

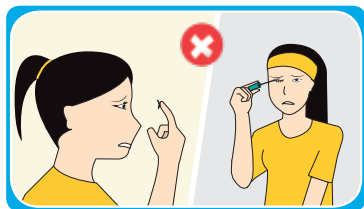
at email: eboff@sneec.com.sg or fax to (65) 6223 2835 prior to your surgery. Failing which, you may have to pay for the deposit stated in the Day Surgery Admission Form.



Bring along your medications (with label) and your pre-operative eye drops.



Bring a pair of sunglasses (wrap-around style is best) to wear after surgery in case your eyes are sensitive to light.

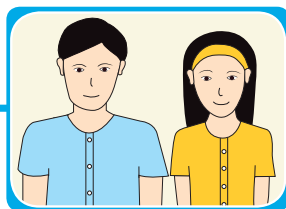


Do not wear contact lenses, jewellery and make-up or false eyelashes.



Do not bring valuables and / or excess cash.

3. What should I wear on the surgery day?

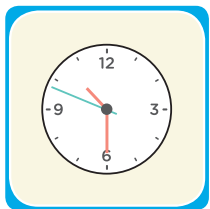


Wear comfortable clothing, e.g. loose pants or skirt and a button-front top with short or loose sleeves. Wear low heeled, non-slip shoes.



Remove your nail polish and / or hair clip before surgery.

4. How long will I need to be in SNEC?



The surgery will usually take less than 30 minutes, but expect to be at the centre for about 3 to 5 hours. Preparation and post-operative observation and instruction take time.

5. Where and what time should I register?

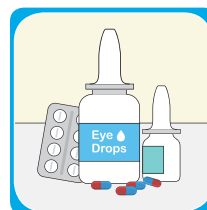


The registration place and time are indicated on the cover of your Day Surgery Guide folder. **Please do not be late for your surgery.**

6. What can I expect after registration?



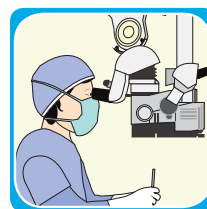
The pre-op nurse will review your medical history to ensure that you are fit for surgery, and check on your eye dilation.



For your safety and well-being, it is extremely important that you inform the nurse all of the medications that you are taking at home.

When it is time for surgery, you will be taken to the operating room by walking with a nurse or being wheeled on a stretcher / wheelchair.

7. What do I expect in the operating room?

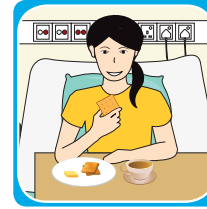


- Once in the operating room, your face will be covered with a sterile drape with a hole for your eye.
- The eyelid is kept open by a small spring. This is not uncomfortable.
- An anaesthetist is with you during surgery to provide sedation to make you feel comfortable and relaxed during the surgery. Depending on the individual, you may not be totally asleep during surgery; however, you will remain comfortable. Anaesthetic eye drops and injections will be given to keep pain to a minimum. It is important to cooperate by not talking or moving your head and body during the surgery.

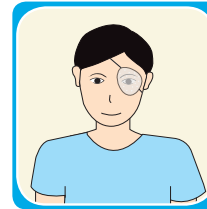
AFTER SURGERY / GOING HOME

POST-SURGERY

1. What can I expect after surgery?



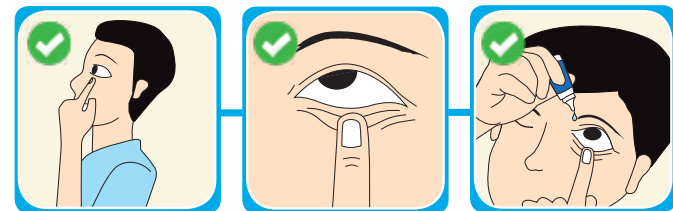
- You will be transferred to the recovery area where the nurse will check on your general condition (e.g. blood pressure monitoring).
- While resting, you will be given some biscuits and a hot drink.



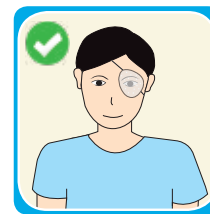
- You will wear an eye shield to protect your operated eye.
- You are ready for discharge when you are alert and stable.
- Before you go home, you will receive your eye drops, instructions about caring for your operated eye, and details of your next appointment.

2. What are the Do's & Don'ts after surgery?

DO's



Apply eye drops (1 month)



Put on eye shield
(while sleeping
for 1 week)



Perform eye cleaning
(1 week)



No food
restrictions

DO's



Allowed to travel



Able to drive (1 day after surgery or until your vision is clear or as advised by doctor)



Wear sunglasses when outdoors (1 week or longer if light sensitive)



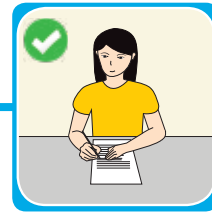
Can watch TV



Can do computer work



Simple cooking is fine (no deep frying)



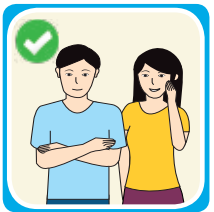
Can do near work (e.g. reading / writing / needlework)



Shower / bathe but avoid water entering eye



Gardening after 2 weeks



Use your eyes!

DON'Ts



Don't rub / press on eye (1 month)



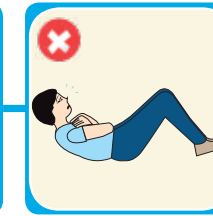
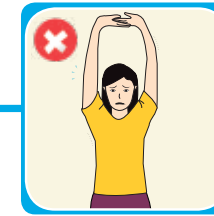
Don't apply make-up (1 month)



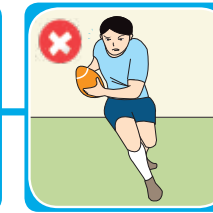
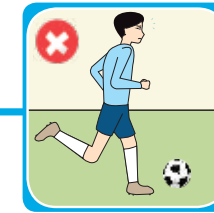
Don't splash water into the eye (2 weeks)



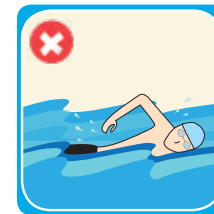
Avoid carrying young children who may accidentally poke your eye



Don't exercise (1 month)



Avoid sports (1 month)



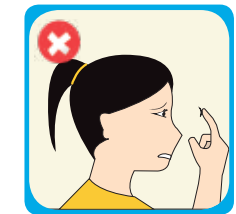
Avoid swimming (1 month)



Don't lift heavy objects (1 month)

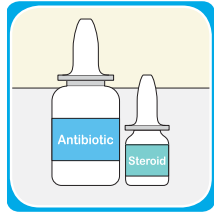


Avoid strenuous work (2-3 weeks)



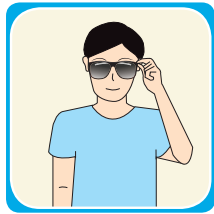
Avoid wearing contact lens (1 month)

3. What eye drops do I need after cataract surgery?

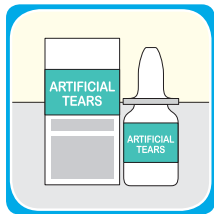


You will need to apply antibiotic and steroid eye drops after surgery for several weeks.

4. How do I take care of my eyes after surgery?



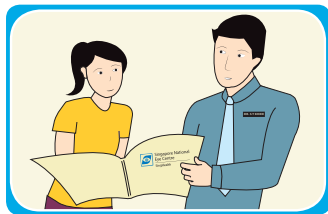
Your eyes may be sensitive to light for weeks or months after surgery. Sunglasses may be worn if you find them helpful. It is normal to experience some redness, watery or grittiness of the eye for a few days or weeks after your cataract surgery.



Artificial tears can be used to relieve this sensation. Symptoms should gradually improve as time passes. While it may be normal to experience some flashes immediately after surgery and occasional floaters, a sudden significant increase in floaters should not be ignored and requires urgent medical attention.

You will take two to four weeks to recover. Any eyeglasses needed should be prescribed between three and six weeks after surgery.

5. Will I have a follow-up appointment?



Yes. Before you go home, you will be given a follow-up appointment to see your ophthalmologist the day after surgery.

6. What should I do if I experience the following symptoms?



- Pain not relieved by medication
- Decreased in vision
- Excessive discharge from operated eye
- Sudden increase of floaters or flashes



Should you experience or notice any of the above symptoms, please seek immediate medical attention at SNEC. For urgent consultation after clinic hours, on Saturdays, Sundays and Public Holidays, please proceed to Singapore General Hospital A&E Department.

7. Who should I contact for repeat medications or further assistance?



You can call:

- **(65) 6227 7266** (Appointments)
– during office hours
- **(65) 6532 4865** (Answering Service)
– after office hours

ABOUT CATARACT SURGERY

ABOUT CATARACT SURGERY

1. What is a cataract?

Cataract is a condition when the natural lens in your eye becomes progressively cloudy.



Normal vision



Vision with cataract

2. What causes cataract?

The most common cause of cataract is ageing. Cataract can also occur at a younger age if you:

- Have excessive sunlight exposure over time (ultraviolet radiation damage)
- Have poorly controlled diabetes
- Take certain types of medication such as corticosteroids, etc.
- Are born with it (congenital)
- Experienced previous trauma to the eye

3. What are the symptoms?

The most common symptoms of a cataract are:

- Cloudy or blurry vision
- Poor night vision
- Colours seem faded
- Glare and haloes

- Frequent prescription changes in your eyeglasses or contact lenses ('power' keeps changing)

These symptoms can also be a sign of other eye problems. If you have any of these symptoms, check with your ophthalmologist.

4. When do I need cataract surgery?

If the amount of cataract is little and does not disturb your vision or your daily activities such as driving or reading, crossing the road or walking down the stairs etc, it can be left alone. In the early stages of a cataract, often a change in glasses prescription is enough. Generally, there is no such thing as a cataract being 'ripe' or 'unripe' for removal. A cataract needs to be removed when vision loss interferes with your everyday activities.

5. Is cataract removed by laser?

No, cataract is not removed by laser. The laser that is commonly and mistakenly referred to is the ultrasound device that is introduced into the eye to 'soften' and 'suck' out the lens.

Cataract is removed by an operation. The procedure requires surgical skill and takes an ophthalmologist many years of specialist training to ensure that the surgery is done safely and efficiently.

6. How is cataract surgery performed?

Cataract surgery is the main surgery performed at the Singapore National Eye Centre (SNEC). The main technique used to remove a cataract is *phacoemulsification*.

In *phacoemulsification*:

- A small opening between 1.8mm and 2.75mm is first created in the periphery of the transparent cornea.
- An ultrasonic device is then introduced through this opening into the eye. This device breaks the cloudy lens up into small pieces and facilitates removal from the eye.
- After the cataract is entirely removed, an artificial lens implant is inserted into the same position.

- This method of cataract surgery takes an average 15-30 minutes. In more difficult cases, it could take more than 30 minutes.
- This is a day surgery procedure hence there is no need to stay overnight in the hospital, unless you are medically unfit.
- An anaesthetist is with you during surgery to provide sedation to make you feel comfortable and relaxed during the surgery. Depending on the individual, you may not be totally asleep during surgery; however, you will remain comfortable. Anaesthetic eye drops and injections will be given to keep pain to a minimum. It is important to cooperate by not talking or moving your head and body during the surgery.

7. What are the types of artificial lens implants?

Monofocal and **multifocal** artificial lens implants are available. Your ophthalmologist will discuss with you and recommend the type of implant that is most suitable for you.



Artificial Lens Implants

Standard Monofocal Lenses

- Most commonly implanted lenses, with equal power in all regions of the lens
- Provide good overall vision at a specific distance (mainly for distant vision)
- Reading glasses will be required
- Suitable for people who are comfortable wearing reading glasses

Multifocal Lenses

- Provide good distance and near vision without glasses
- Convenient as both near and intermediate vision (for fixed distances) can be clearer using these lenses
- However, some people may find it difficult to read fine print, especially in dim light and may experience glare and haloes which may be bothersome
- This lens should be used in both eyes
- Suitable for people who want to reduce their dependence on glasses for far and near vision

8. What happens after my cataract surgery?

After the operation, you will need to:

- Apply eye drops in your operated eye
- Clean your eye for the first one (1) week
- Keep your eye covered with an eye shield on the day of surgery and every night while sleeping for one (1) week
- Prevent contaminated water from entering the eye

After cataract surgery, depending on the choice of lens implant:

- You may need eyeglasses for reading only
- You may need to wear eyeglasses for seeing far and for reading, or you may not need eyeglasses at all.
- You will take two to four weeks to recover. Any eyeglasses needed should be prescribed between three and six weeks after surgery.

9. What are the risks of cataract surgery?

As with any surgery, cataract surgery poses risks such as infection and bleeding. Before the surgery, your ophthalmologist may ask you to temporarily stop taking certain medications that increase the risk of bleeding during surgery.

After surgery, you must keep your eye clean, wash your hands before touching your eye, and use the prescribed medications to help minimise the risk of infection. Serious infection can result in loss of vision.

Possible complications that may occur during surgery:

- Rupture of the lens capsule ('bag') that supports the lens resulting in the implant being placed in the wrong position.

Possible complications that may occur soon after surgery:

- Infection (Endophthalmitis)
- Inflammation
- Bleeding
- Retinal detachment
- High eye pressure for a few days
- Leaking wound which may require stitching
- Cloudiness of the cornea
- Swelling of the retina
- Sensitive to eye drops
- Displaced lens implant
- Droopy eyelids

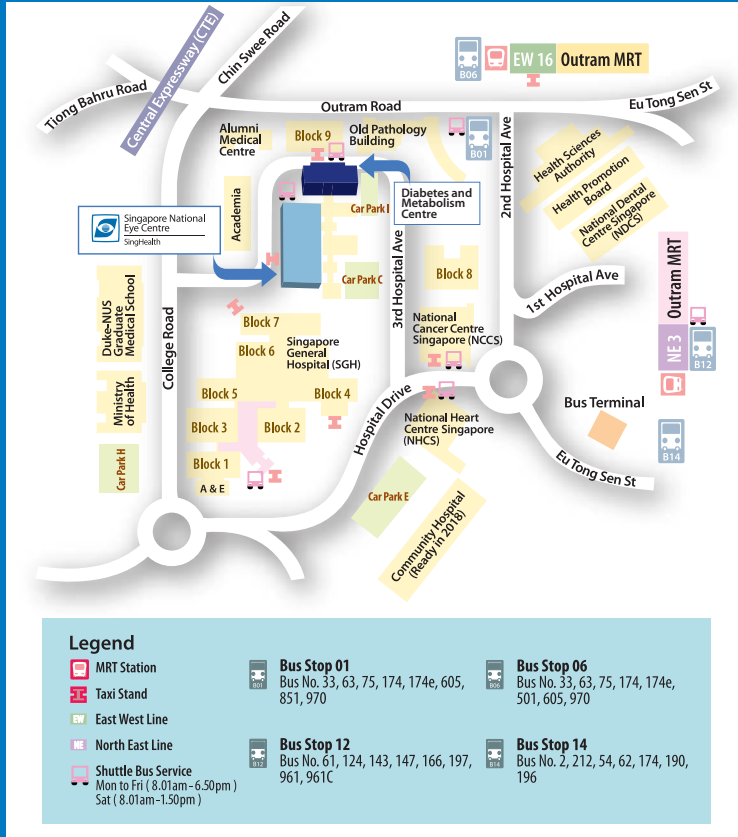
Your risk of complications is greater if you have another eye disease or a serious medical condition affecting any part of your body. Occasionally, cataract surgery fails to improve vision because of underlying eye damage from other conditions, such as glaucoma or macular degeneration. If possible, it may be beneficial to evaluate and treat other eye problems before making the decision to have cataract surgery.

10. Can a cataract come back after surgery?

After cataract surgery, it is not possible for a cataract to come back because the lens, where the cataract grows, has been removed. The new lens implant will last a lifetime and will not need maintenance or replacement.

However, it is possible for a cloudy film to grow on the lens capsule ('bag') that is located behind the lens implant. This is called posterior capsule opacification (PCO). This usually occurs some months or years after surgery. If the cloudiness of the lens capsule ('bag') affects your vision, it can be cleared with a 5-minute, painless laser treatment. The cost of the laser treatment is not included in the cataract surgery cost.

LOCATION MAP



This FAQ guide is for patients who have been listed for cataract surgery. It aims to answer questions about cataract surgery – explaining what patients can expect before, during and after their cataract surgery. The information does not replace the need for individual advice from an ophthalmologist. Please consult with your ophthalmologist about your specific eye condition and/or concerns. The contents of this leaflet are not to be produced in any form without the prior permission of the Singapore National Eye Centre.

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SingHealth

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