

CATARACT

CATARACT EXTRACTION AND INTRAOCULAR LENS INSERTION

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What is a cataract?

The natural lens sits inside the eye just behind the pupil. It allows us to focus (like the lens of a camera). The lens is normally transparent. As we age it can gradually become opaque or cloudy. The lens material consists of protein and water arranged in a way that allows light to pass through. If this protein arrangement changes and clumps together, the lens becomes opaque, which is commonly known as a cataract.

Cataract surgery is the most common procedure performed around the world. Most Australians over the age of 65 are affected by the condition to an extent.

Symptoms

Most cataracts develop gradually, therefore you may not be aware of early cataract formation. As the cataract progresses, you may notice:

- Foggy, blurred or cloudy vision
- Haloes around lights/difficulties with night driving
- Double or multiple images in one eye
- A change in glasses prescriptions
- Yellowish/brownish tinged vision

Nik has a specific interest in conventional and laser assisted cataract surgery, laser vision correction, alternatives to laser surgery, cornea transplantation, pterygium surgery and the management of keratoconus.

Nik graduated in Medicine from the University of Newcastle in 1998, then completed an ophthalmology residency at the Sydney Eye Hospital and undertook subspecialty fellowship training in Cataract, Cornea and Refractive Surgery at the University of Toronto in 2009.

He is a member of the Australian, American and European Societies of Cataract and Refractive Surgery. He has published numerous peer-reviewed papers and book chapters involving these specialty interests. Nik was amongst the first surgeons in Australia to perform femtosecond laser assisted cataract surgery.



Using an operating microscope, Dr Kumar will make a tiny 2.4mm long incision at the side of the cornea (front surface of the eye). This incision is required to allow for a device to be passed through the cornea and into the eye. This device uses a “phaco” machine to break up the cataract into smaller pieces using vibrations and pulses, finally extracting it through a small tube. This technique is called “phacoemulsification” and is widely used around the world.

Your new IOL is folded into a small tube and passed through the same 2.4mm incision and injected into the eye. It will begin to unfold once inside the eye and Dr Kumar will position the IOL correctly. The arms on the side of the IOL firmly hold it in position and should not dislodge or move.

The tiny incision does not need stitches to close, although occasionally a suture may be required. It will heal naturally on its own in most cases. The entire operation will take approximately 15-30 minutes.

