

“Believe me, it is like a new world for me *without* glasses.”

Ray Lockhart, Veteran and Clemson Eye Cataract Patient



Cataracts by the Numbers

It's a fact of life. As we age, the lenses in our eyes become cloudy, causing blurry vision, washed-out colors, glare and rings of light known as "halos" – often occurring at night while we drive. This condition is known as cataracts.

In this article, we'll examine the incidence of cataracts, some little known facts and the innovations being made in treating cataracts.

Safe and Common Surgery

Cataracts affect more than 20.5 million Americans over the age of 40.¹ Three million cataract surgeries are performed in the United States each year, which makes it one of the most commonly performed surgeries.² By age 80, one in two people (50%) either have cataracts or have already had them removed.³

A comprehensive eye exam is required for a definitive diagnosis and to determine if any other eye disorders are contributing to the blurred vision. When cataracts cause enough visual disturbance to interfere with your work, hobbies, ability to drive or lifestyle, it is probably time to remove them. The surgery involves removing the clouded lens and replacing it with a permanent artificial one, called an “intraocular lens.”

Results You Can See

A full 95% of cataract patients in the U.S. experience improved vision after surgery.⁴ Despite the safety of the procedure and the visual improvements:

- Only 2 in 5 cataract patients plan to have surgery in the next two years.
- 44% of cataract patients put off

surgery because their vision is “fine for now”.

- 14% of cataract patients say they are “fearful” or “afraid” of surgery.²

This fear is unwarranted as the vast majority of people who undergo cataract surgery say ‘the experience is easier than they expected’.⁵ The inertia is risky, as left untreated, cataracts can lead to blindness. They are the leading cause of vision loss in the U.S.

“Witnessing the absolute delight of cataract patients who can see clearly again, often without glasses regardless of their age, is a highly gratifying part of being an eye surgeon,” says Dr. Don Glaser, Eye Surgeon at Clemson Eye’s Anderson clinic.

Ray Lockhart, Cataract Patient

According to Ray Lockhart, a recent patient of Clemson Eye’s Dr. Parisi, “The procedure was fantastic. For as long as I can remember, I’ve had to wear glasses. I had cataracts in both my eyes, so I was happy when Dr. Parisi told me he could remove them and eliminate the need for me to wear glasses. Believe me, it is like a new world for me without glasses. I’ve given all my old glasses to the Lion’s Club!”

Mr. Lockhart, an avid tennis player and former U.S. serviceman, adds “The procedure was quick and painless. You can say it’s an ‘operation’, but it didn’t feel like it to me!”

Impact of Vision Loss

One of our greatest fears as we age is losing our independence. Visual loss

often results in falls, injuries, depression and social isolation. It impedes our ability to read, drive, cook, garden, watch TV, do crafts and hobbies, and use technology. In short, it stops us from doing the things we love.

Once you have cataracts, there is usually no reason to wait until they are more fully formed to have them treated. This is why many patients are opting for sooner than later. They want improved vision now so they can carry on being independent and enjoy life.

Number of Patients ⁴	Said....
2 out of 3	Less dependent on glasses for distance vision after cataract surgery.
2 out of 3	Surprised by how much their vision improved.
2 out of 3	Can read better (with or without glasses) after surgery.
82%	Cataract surgery made it easier to drive.
93%	Can now see distant road signs better.
85%	Surgery addressed all or most problems they experienced before their cataracts were removed.

Innovations in Cataract Surgery

Ever-improving technology plays a large role in eye care. Today, cataract patients can choose the intraocular lens (IOL) replacement that best suits their lifestyle. For instance, a multifocal lens implant

like the ReSTOR® lens, provides a range of vision. Note that patients can still opt for a traditional “monofocal” lens, understanding that they will still likely be dependent on glasses after cataract surgery.

Along with improved lens implant technology, cataract surgery has advanced to include the femtosecond laser. The laser replaces many of the surgical steps that used to be performed manually by the surgeon. The added precision of the laser results in truly excellent visual outcomes.⁶

Eye Exam is Best Way to Know

If you think you may have a cataract, we encourage you to book an eye exam. In terms of costs and payment, basic cataract surgery is covered by most insurance plans. Laser assisted cataract surgery and advanced lens implants require an additional payment. If you’re a Clemson Eye patient, you have the option of 24-month, 0% payment plans. Whether you may have a cataract or not, an annual eye exam is recommended for all seniors to help ensure your visual health and quality of life.

1 http://www.cdc.gov/visionhealth/basic_information/eye_disorders.htm
 2 <http://www.aao.org/publications/eyenet/200609/pearls.cfm>
 3 http://www.nei.nih.gov/health/ataract/ataract_facts.asp
 4 http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/wilmer/conditions/ataracts_faq.html
 5 Data on File. AARP/Alcon Vision Survey, April 2013
 6 Palanker DV, Blumenkranz MS, Andersen D, et al. Femtosecond laser-assisted cataract surgery with integrated optical coherence tomography. *Sci Transl Med* 2010; 2:58ra85.

Left to right: Dr. Glaser, Dr. Parisi and Dr. Johnson.



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