



Ythan Opticians

Professional Eye Care

Cataracts

What is a cataract?

A cataract is a clouding of part of the eye called the lens. Your vision becomes blurred because the cataract is like a frosted glass, interfering with your sight.

Many people over 60 have some cataract and the vast majority can be treated successfully. Early cataracts may not affect your sight and do not need treatment. The effect of cataract are:

- ▶ blurry sight
- ▶ dazzled by light
- ▶ change of colour vision

Causes

Cataracts can form at any age. The most common type of cataracts is age-related cataract. These develop as people get older. In younger people cataracts can result from conditions such as diabetes, certain medications and other longstanding eye problems. Cataracts can also be present at birth. These are called congenital cataracts.

Although researchers are learning more about cataracts, no one knows for sure what causes them. There may be several causes and some studies have linked smoking, excessive exposure to sunlight and poor diet with cataract development. Sometimes cataracts are caused by other health problems such as diabetes.

Treatment

The most effective treatment for cataract is an operation to remove the cloudy lens. This is often done under local anaesthetic as a day-case procedure. A good diet may also help to slow the growth of age-related cataract.

If you are a driver you must reach the visual standard required by the Drivers and Vehicle Licensing Authority, and it may be necessary to have the cataract removed in order to keep your licence.

Possible problems

Cataract surgery is one of the most successful operations. Fewer than two per cent of patients have serious, unforeseen complications.

One of the most common and easily correctable complications is a thickening of the lens casing - the part of the eye that holds the lens in place. This can easily be corrected with laser treatment.