




Understanding Cataract Treatment

I've been told I have a cataract, now what? If glasses or contact lenses no longer improve vision, you may be a candidate for cataract surgery. A full medical/surgical evaluation is required prior to cataract surgery by Dr. Hughes, Dr. Davis, Dr. Nordtvedt or Dr. Underwood. There will be a number of advanced tests to determine if cataract surgery is in your best interest and if you are within insurance guidelines.

What is a cataract? A cataract is a cloudy area in the natural lens of the eye. There are different types of cataracts, some develop slowly and others advance in a short period of time. Most individuals have a cataract in both eyes, and often one cataract may be worse than the other. Cataracts may be small and not affect daily vision. Other cataracts may limit activities of daily life and cause problems with night driving or fine near point activities.

Treatment of my cataract: In order to improve vision and basic activities of daily life, a cataract is removed by a special form of ultrasound called phacoemulsification. After the cataract is removed, an intraocular lens implant, or IOL, is inserted to improve the clarity of your vision. Cataracts do not grow back, but it is very common for the natural membrane behind the lens implant to develop haze or mild scarring after cataract treatment. When this occurs, vision may be improved by an in office YAG laser treatment months to years after cataract surgery.

Lens implants: Prior to surgery, testing and detailed measurements are required to determine the best size, power and position of the lens implant. Lens implants DO NOT eliminate glasses after cataract surgery; however, some implants may greatly reduce the dependency on glasses after surgery. It is necessary to decide on the type of implant you desire prior to surgery. Your options are listed below:

-  **Standard Implant (Grey or Yellow Package):** A basic lens implant improves distance vision. Glasses are usually required following cataract surgery with a standard lens implant. Your insurance typically covers the cost of a standard lens implant after your deductible and insurance co-pays are met.
-  **Astigmatism /Toric Implant (Blue Package):** Have you been told you have Astigmatism? Astigmatism refers to the shape of eye (cornea). When astigmatism is present, the cornea is not perfectly round, it is more oval in shape like the back of a spoon. A Toric lens implant surgically reduces astigmatism, therefore greatly reducing your dependence on glasses for distance vision after cataract surgery. Insurance companies WILL NOT cover the cost of a Toric lens implant.
-  **Advanced Technology Implant (Orange Package):** This implant improves distance, intermediate (computer vision) and near reading vision. This is a great lens implant if you are an active person with numerous visual requirements. Advanced testing and evaluation are required to determine if you are a candidate for an advanced technology lens. Your doctor will then determine if this lens would benefit you according to lifestyle, expectations and overall health of your eye. Insurance companies WILL NOT cover the cost of an advanced technology lens implant.

Who is my surgeon? David Underwood, M.D. is our chief cataract surgeon. Dr. Underwood has been performing cataract surgery over 25 years with thousands of successful procedures. All of our doctors work together as a team to provide you with the best possible outcome with cataract surgery.

Where will my surgery be done? Cataract surgery is performed in a local hospital (Outpatient) or a surgery center. Our surgical locations include West Tennessee Healthcare Surgery Center in Jackson, Henderson County Community Hospital in Lexington, Hardin County Hospital in Savannah, and Henry County Medical Center in Paris, or Baptist Memorial Hospital Carroll County in Huntingdon, TN.

When will my surgery be done? After a medical/surgical consultation with one of the Hughes Eye doctors, you will meet with our surgery counselor to provide a surgical date at your desired location. The counselor will review the guidelines of your insurance, requirements prior to surgery, expectations the day of surgery and after surgery care instructions. You will be given a folder with all the information discussed at your visit.

Supplies: To prevent infection, promote healing and provide the best possible outcome after surgery, a few supplies are necessary. These supplies include: eye drops, protective items, and materials to assist you before and after cataract treatment. You are required to obtain these items prior to cataract treatment. As a convenience to our patients, our clinic has purchased the necessary supplies in bulk and pre-assembled these items for you. The kits include all of the supplies listed above, with the exception of eye drops. Required eye drops prescriptions can be sent to your preferred pharmacy or you can choose “Less Drops” which is a single eye bottle with (3) medications mixed in one bottle. “Less Drops” is a cash only expense and not covered by insurance companies.

Warfarin/Plavix/Coumadin/Aspirin (Blood thinners) – Please inform our technician if you take any form of blood thinners. Most patients can continue blood thinners before and after surgery.

Flomax (or generic), Tamsulosin, prostate medicines, and/or saw palmetto – Inform our technician if you are presently taking or have taken prostate or bladder medications. This will NOT prevent you from having cataract treatment, but will allow the surgeon to take extra precautions.

Will I need glasses after my cataracts are removed? For your best vision after cataract surgery, most patients will require glasses especially for near activities. Cataract surgery rarely completely eliminates glasses for all distances and does not result in perfect vision. Regardless of the type of lens implant you choose; a pair of glasses may be needed for your clearest, sharpest vision.

How much will the surgery cost me? Most medical insurances will help with costs associated with cataract surgery. Your “out of pocket” expense depends on YOUR individual co-pay and deductible. Insurance benefits change constantly and we live in times of massive deductibles. Rarely will any insurance cover 100% of your surgical expenses. There are three different billing statements for cataract surgery: 1) The Hughes Eye Group, 2) the Hospital/Surgery Center and 3) Anesthesia.

Hughes Eye Insurance Counselors: The full-time and dedicated insurance counselors at The Hughes Eye Group will assist by explaining the benefits of your insurance plan. We will verify and **estimate** your financial responsibility prior to surgery. This estimate will include your deductible, co-pay, co-insurance and your other financial responsibilities. **As per insurance guidelines, all co-pays, deductibles and/or patient responsibility are collected in full prior to your planned cataract treatment. The surgical facility and anesthesia bill separately.** (Updated 8/22/18)