

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, Dr. McCarty, or Dr. Underwood. There will be several advanced tests to determine if cataract surgery is in your best interest and if you are within insurance guidelines for the procedure.

What is a cataract? A cataract is a clouding of 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 near activities.

How is a cataract treated? A cataract is removed by a special form of ultrasound called phacoemulsification. After cataract removal, an intraocular lens implant (or IOL) is placed in the eye 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.

What is Laser Cataract Surgery? Many patients choose not only to treat the cataract, but also to customize their vision to reduce glasses with surgery. For patients electing advanced laser cataract surgery, the LenSx femtosecond laser is used to dissolve the cataract prior to the surgeon entering the eye, create precisely placed incisions, aid in centration of the lens implant within the eye, as well as fine tune astigmatism correction. Hughes Eye Group utilizes a seamless surgical platform syncing in-office measurements with the laser in the operating room to create an image guided procedure.

What are the types of 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 completely eliminate glasses after cataract surgery; however, some implants may significantly reduce the dependency on glasses after surgery. It is necessary to choose the type of implant you desire prior to surgery. Your doctor will help you decide on an implant based on your measurements and your vision goals. Lens options are listed below:



Standard Implant: 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 basic surgery with a standard lens implant after your deductible and insurance co-pays are met. Advanced packages and laser cataract surgery combined with a standard implant involve out of pocket expenses.



Astigmatism /Toric Implant: 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. A toric lens implant and advanced laser packages involve out of pocket costs.



Multifocus Implant: A multifocus implant improves distance (driving), intermediate (computer vision) and near vision (reading). This lens implant is a great option for active patients with numerous visual requirements. Your doctor will determine if this lens would benefit you according to your lifestyle, expectations, and the overall health of your eye. A multifocus lens implant and advanced laser packages involve out of pocket costs.

Who is my surgeon? David Underwood, M.D. is our primary cataract surgeon. 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, The Jackson Clinic – Baptist Outpatient Campus in Jackson, Henderson County Community Hospital in Lexington, Hardin County Hospital in Savannah, and Baptist Memorial Hospital Carroll County in Huntingdon, TN.

When will my surgery be done? After a 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 to take home with all the information discussed at your visit.

What supplies are needed? To prevent infection, promote healing, and provide the best outcome after surgery, a few supplies are necessary. You are required to obtain these items prior to cataract treatment. As a convenience to our patients, our clinic has pre-assembled After Surgery Kits available for purchase in our office. The After Surgery Kit includes a protective eye shield, tape to secure the eye shield, and protective sunglasses. Prescription eye drops are also critical to prevent infection after surgery. These required eye drop prescriptions can be sent to your pharmacy or you may choose “LessDrops” which is a single bottle with (3) medications mixed in one for convenience. LessDrops is a cash only expense and not covered by insurance companies. After Surgery Kits and LessDrops are included in all advanced and laser cataract packages.

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 ever taken prostate or bladder medications. This will NOT prevent you from having cataract treatment, but this will allow the surgeon to take extra precautions.

Will I need glasses after my cataracts are removed? The advanced and laser cataract surgery options mentioned above may greatly reduce your dependency on glasses after surgery. Rarely, will cataract surgery completely eliminate glasses for all distances. Depending on the health and anatomy of your eye, cataract surgery may not result in perfect vision. Regardless of the type of surgery you choose, a pair of glasses may be needed to achieve 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 many current insurance plans include high 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 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.**

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