

# Cataracts



**FIGHTING  
BLINDNESS  
CANADA**

Cataracts are the most common cause of vision loss in Canada. As you age, the lens in your eye (behind your pupil) can become cloudy and form a cataract. This is a normal part of aging and almost everyone will develop a cataract in their lifetime. You may not notice symptoms at first, or you may notice symptoms in one eye before the other. The most common treatment for cataracts is surgery. Surgery is a safe and effective way of managing cataracts.



## SYMPTOMS

The symptoms you experience may be different depending on the type of cataract that is forming. Your doctor may notice a cataract in a routine eye exam before you notice symptoms.

### Common symptoms include:

- Cloudy, blurry, or double vision
- Difficulty seeing at night
- Sensitivity to bright lights
- Seeing rings (halos) around lights
- Inability to identify certain colors

## RISK FACTORS

Your risk of developing cataracts increases as you age. Some health conditions and behaviours may also increase your risk of cataracts, like:

- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Exposure to sunlight
- Smoking
- High blood pressure
- Eye injury
- Eye surgery
- Extended use of steroid medications
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Other genetic disorders that predispose you to cataracts (like retinitis pigmentosa)

Fighting Blindness Canada is the largest charitable funder of vision research in Canada. We offer hope to Canadians by funding the best, most promising research that is driving treatments and cures for blinding eye diseases.

# HEALTHY HABITS TO HELP PREVENT VISION LOSS

It is important to practice healthy habits to protect your vision.

**Lifestyle** Practice healthy habits like eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise. Maintain a healthy blood pressure. If you smoke, consider quitting. Wear sunglasses when you are outside.

**Educate** Learn about your condition, symptoms, and treatment. The more you know, the more confidence you will have in managing your cataracts.

**Treatment** If your doctor has recommended cataract surgery, discuss your questions and concerns with them. Review pre and post surgery instructions thoroughly.

## ASSESS YOUR RISK OF VISION LOSS

Bring this handout to your next eye exam (i.e. optometrist, ophthalmologist).

Write down your questions in advance and ask your doctor to explain any answers you may be uncertain of.

Risk factors	My notes	Questions for my doctor
Appointment	The last time I had an eye exam was:	
Vision changes	I have noticed these changes to my vision:	
Blood pressure	The last time I checked, my blood pressure was:	
Lifestyle changes	in the past three months, I have changed: (diet, exercise, medication)	
Other symptoms	I have noticed these things about my health:	

For more information about cataracts, visit [fightingblindness.ca/ataracts](https://fightingblindness.ca/ataracts)