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PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

WHAT ARE MY CHOICES FOR VISION AND GLASSES AFTER CATARACT SURGERY?

This information sheet answers common questions about your choices for vision and glasses after cataract surgery. If you would like further information or have any particular worries or questions, please do not hesitate to ask your consultant. Your consultant will also explain the cataract procedure and show you a video.

Standard monofocal lenses

Your lens, which helps you focus, is removed during the operation and is replaced with an artificial lens, this is called an intraocular lens implant.

There is a choice of different strengths (powers) of lenses which, just like different strengths of glasses lenses, affect how clearly you see when looking at near objects such as a book.

During your initial assessment your consultant will discuss with you whether you want to have better vision. Most people choose to aim for good distance vision after the operation. If you choose this option, you will usually need reading glasses and you may still need glasses for fine focusing in the distance.

Some people choose to aim for good close vision especially if they like to read without glasses or do a lot of detailed close work such as embroidery. Should you choose this option you will need glasses for distance.

Monovision:

It is possible to aim deliberately for distance vision in one eye and near vision in the other eye to try and minimise the need for glasses. This is called monovision.

If you choose this option you may find it difficult to adjust and may have some visual difficulties as only one eye is used at a time, for either distance or near vision. You may still need glasses for some tasks such as computer work or night driving. The option is not always ideal and you should only choose this after very careful consideration. In order to test trial the expected outcome, you could use contact lenses mimicking the effect of monovision outcome for a few days and if comfortable, then most likely will be comfortable with surgical result.

Multifocal Lenses

Multifocal lenses are lenses that aim to correct vision for both near and distance. The quality and biocompatibility of standard monofocal and multifocal is the same. Multifocal lenses do not work for all patients and may cause some visual quality problems. Some patients might experience reduced vision and halos around bright lights especially night time. Your consultant will be able to explain further and answer any questions.

Toric Lenses

Toric lenses are suitable for some patients with moderate to high astigmatism undergoing cataract surgery. A toric lens is made of the same material as a standard non-toric lens and is used to correct moderate to high corneal astigmatism. The aim is to improve your vision so that you do not need to wear glasses for distance vision but as with standard lenses you will still need to wear glasses to read.

Toric lenses are not required if you are happy to wear glasses for distance and are not suitable if you have other problems apart from cataract and high astigmatism or if the astigmatism is not caused by the shape of the cornea, (the clear window of your eye).

The surgery is the same as a standard cataract surgery except, once the toric lens has been inserted it is carefully rotated to the correct position (angle) for each patient. A standard lens does not need to be placed so precisely.

There are some potential risks with toric lenses:

- A toric lens may not fully correct the astigmatism and you may still need glasses for distance. Further correcting of this remaining astigmatism may not be possible
- If complications occur during cataract surgery, it may not be possible to insert a toric lens and a non-toric lens may need to be used
- The lens can rotate and a second operation may be needed to rotate the toric lens back into position for best vision, with the additional risk of further surgery
- Some patients may require further surgery to remove the toric lens and replace it with a standard lens
- There are some alternative options to using toric lenses for those with high astigmatism. You may choose surgery with standard lenses and correct the astigmatism with glasses or contact lenses. Standard cataract surgery may be combined with additional cuts in the cornea (limbal relaxing incisions) to reduce the astigmatism.

Please note that toric and Multifocal Lenses are not normally covered by medical insurance companies and are not included in standard self funding cataract packages. The finance team will be able to confirm the additional cost before the procedure takes place. They can be contacted on 07557 040 097.

If you have any further questions regarding your lens choice please call 0207 432 8315.