

Should I have cataract surgery?

Whether you decide to have cataract surgery will depend on many things. Just because you have a cataract doesn't mean you should have it removed immediately. And these days, we don't need to wait till a cataract is 'ripe' (well developed).

Your decision will probably depend on how much the cataract is affecting your daily life. So please read the following four questions because they will help you decide whether cataract surgery is right for you:

1. How well can you see?

Generally, if you can see quite well, it's probably best not to have surgery yet. All cataract surgery carries a small risk, so it's better to wait until you really need it.

If you can answer 'yes' to the following points, then you may benefit from having surgery soon:

- I feel I am at significant risk of falls due to your reduced/blurred vision.
- I find it difficult to access transport, such as buses or driving.
- My independence is affected by my sight.
- It is difficult to carry out tasks at work or undertake caring responsibilities due to my reduced vision.
- I find it difficult to undertake daily activities such as reading, watching television, leaving the house or recognising faces.
- The glare or dazzle I experience stops me doing things.

2. Can you see well enough to drive?

Generally, the chance of your eyesight being improved by surgery is slightly lower if you can already see well enough to drive safely.

3. What does your optometrist think?

Ask your optometrist for their advice. They can tell you about the risks of surgery and help you decide whether you want to have it.

4. How quickly will your cataract worsen?

We can't say how quickly your cataract will develop and get worse. But even if your cataract is bad, this won't usually affect the result of the surgery.

NHS Decision Aid for Cataracts

To aid your decision whether to proceed with cataract surgery the NHS has created an online shared decision-making tool, this can be found at:

<https://www.healthwise.net/cochranedecisionaid/Content/StdDocument.aspx?DOCHWID=aa57339>

If you decide to have surgery

If you decide to go ahead with surgery, your Optometrist will directly refer you for surgery following your cataract assessment.

About your records

The provider keeps the records for these services on a computer. If you are referred to other health professionals, the details may be shared with them to ensure you get the best care.