

The Everett Clinic

For the whole you.

CATARACT SURGERY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What is Cataract surgery? A cataract is a clouding of the eye's natural lens, most commonly due to aging. Cataract surgery involves removing your cataract and replacing it with an artificial lens implant in an effort to improve your vision.

What are the risks of Cataract surgery?

As with any surgery, there are certain risks. The most common risks include infection (<1/1000 cases) and prolonged swelling of the cornea and retina after surgery (<5%) usually in patients with pre-existing eye conditions or an extremely dense cataract. Your surgeon will advise you of your specific risks pertaining to your eye at your consultation. Antibiotic and steroid eye drops are used to prevent and treat these two complications. Very rarely, loss of vision or the need for a second surgery may occur. Overall, these risks are extremely low, and the vast majority of patients report high satisfaction and improvement of vision after cataract surgery.

What are the differences between the types of artificial or intraocular lenses?

Patients who are not bothered by wearing glasses after cataract surgery will enjoy excellent vision with traditional artificial lenses but will need to update their glasses after surgery. These are usually prescribed one month after surgery. Premium artificial lenses and options are available for select patients who wish to invest in decreasing their need for glasses after cataract surgery. Your medical insurance does not cover the cost of these advanced technologies which include: Presbyopia correcting or Toric artificial lenses. Extra fees will apply.

A Presbyopia correcting artificial lens can decrease your need of glasses for both distance and near vision. If you have significant astigmatism, you may be a candidate for a Toric artificial lens. Your eye doctor will recommend options based on your lifestyle and your eye exam.

Does insurance pay for Cataract surgery? Cataract surgery is a medical procedure, Insurance companies and Medicare will pay for the surgery and the implantation of a traditional artificial lens. Premium options such as a Presbyopia correcting or Toric artificial lenses are not covered. However, your employer's flexible spending or health savings plans may offer tax advantages for these services. The Everett Clinic also offers a payment plan if you choose a premium artificial lens option.

If you have any questions regarding your insurance coverage

CALL The Everett Clinic Business Services (425-258-3900)

Give them the Cataract Surgery Procedure CPT code: **66984**

Ask for the total cost of the cataract surgery including:

Facility: \$ _____
Surgeon: \$ _____
Anesthesia: \$ _____ (40 minutes)

Lastly, call your insurance company with the total estimate and they should be able to tell you your estimated out of pocket costs.

BEFORE CATARACT SURGERY:

CAN TAKE ASPIRIN (or Plavix), COUMADIN (WARFARIN) or other blood thinners BEFORE AND AFTER MY SURGERY? Modern cataract surgery rarely causes any bleeding inside the eye. There is no need to stop blood thinners. This generally only applies to cataract surgery. Ask your eye doctor if you are having a different type of eye surgery that is not a cataract surgery, such as retina, glaucoma, eyelid or cornea surgery.

CAN I EAT OR DRINK BEFORE SURGERY? It is important to not to eat anything after midnight the night before your cataract surgery. You can take a small sip of water to take any pills as normal. A preop nurse will call you 2 days before your surgery to give you further instructions.

CAN I WEAR EYE MAKEUP BEFORE SURGERY? Please do not wear make up on the day of surgery.

DO I TAKE MY PILLS ON THE MORNING OF SURGERY? Yes. Take all your usual medications the morning of surgery with a sip of water. If you are a diabetic, you will be given special instructions regarding any insulin when you speak to the pre-operative nurse (two days prior to surgery).

HOW LONG WILL I BE ON EYE DROPS? You will use prescription eyedrops for 1 month after your cataract surgery. You will receive specific instructions and prescriptions for your eyedrops at your preop appointment.

DAY OF SURGERY:

WHERE WILL I HAVE MY SURGERY? Your surgery will be performed across the street at the Everett Clinic Kemp Surgery Center, 3927 Rucker Ave, Everett, WA 98201. The Surgery Center is located on the first floor of the Gunderson Building.

HOW LONG WILL I BE AT THE SURGERY CENTER THE DAY OF MY SURGERY? Even though your operation itself usually takes 20-30 minutes, you should plan to spend 2-3 hours at the Surgery Center. Extra time is needed to dilate your eyes and prepare you for surgery, followed by post-operative observation and instructions.

ON THE DAY OF SURGERY, WHAT SHOULD I WEAR? Wear a loose shirt or a shirt that buttons in front. Do not wear jewelry.

WILL SURGERY HURT? Patients are typically very relaxed from the sedation and your eye is numbed with eyedrops, so you do not feel any sharp pain. You may feel fluid to keep your eyes moisturized or mild pressure, but most patients are surprised how comfortable they are and report little discomfort.

WILL I BE AWAKE DURING SURGERY? The surgery is done with sedation (IV) anesthesia. You may doze off, but many of patients are in a 'twilight state' and very relaxed for the surgery. Most times, patients recall very little from the actual surgery itself due to the anesthesia medication.

HOW DO I KEEP FROM BLINKING DURING THE SURGERY? We use a gentle device that will support and keep your eyelids open for the surgery.

DO I SEE MY SURGERY? Most patients report seeing a kaleidoscope of colors and lights.

WILL IT HURT AFTERWARD? Minor pain or headaches after surgery are usually resolved with Tylenol. This generally resolves the day after surgery. It is common to have some "sandy" or "scratchy" feelings mostly the first day of surgery. Artificial Tears or resting with your eyes closed can help soothe the eyes for this mild irritation. Prescription eye drops can sting after the surgery; this lasts <24 hours after surgery.

WILL I GET STITCHES? Most cataract surgeries use small self-sealing incisions. Occasionally your surgeon may decide to use a temporary suture if needed. This suture is removed in the clinic at a later date.

CAN BOTH EYES BE TREATED AT THE SAME TIME? No, only one eye will be treated at a time. The second eye can be treated approximately 2-4 weeks later, after the first eye has stabilized.

AFTER CATARACT SURGERY

WILL I BE WEARING A PATCH AFTER SURGERY? You will wear an eye shield after cataract surgery for one week to be used only when you sleep. This is to prevent you from accidentally rubbing your eyes in your sleep.

HOW SOON WILL I SEE AFTER SURGERY? Vision is usually blurry during the first few days after surgery. In most patients their vision clears up significantly at the following 1 week follow up appointment.

WHEN CAN I RETURN TO WORK? This varies among patients. Many patients can return to work the following day after cataract surgery depending on their job. Most patients take the day of surgery and the following day after surgery off work. You will not be able to lift anything over 10 lbs. or bend over from the waist down for one week if you return to work.

WHEN CAN I RESUME MY NORMAL ACTIVITIES? Most patients can resume normal activities the day after cataract surgery. This includes walking, reading, cooking and watching TV. Avoid heavy lifting (>10 pounds), straining, deep bending at the waist, strenuous exercise, and eye make up for one week. Avoid swimming or lake activities for 4 weeks after cataract surgery.

WHEN CAN I DRIVE AFTER MY SURGERY? You will not be able to drive for 24 hours after surgery. Following the first day of surgery, if your vision is clear enough, you may drive later that day. Be prepared to have someone else drive for you if your vision is not sufficiently clear and you do not feel safe. Please ask your surgeon at your post op appointment for guidance.

WHEN CAN I GO TO THE MOUNTAINS OR RIDE IN AN AIRPLANE? High altitude and air travel pose no problems after cataract surgery. We generally prefer that you stay in town for at least two weeks after your cataract surgery in the rare event you have a post-operative complication.

WHEN CAN I WEAR MAKEUP? Avoid any eye makeup for 1 week after cataract surgery.

WHEN CAN I SHOWER? You can shower and wash your face after cataract surgery. Be sure to gently close your eye to prevent any water splashing into your eyes.

WILL MY CATARACT EVER GROW BACK? Cataracts do not grow back. The artificial lens implant is made of a clear acrylic plastic that will last your lifetime. However, several months or years after cataract surgery a clouding of the posterior capsule which is behind the intraocular lens implant may occur. Fortunately, a painless, in-office laser procedure, called a YAG capsulotomy, can clear the clouding in a few minutes.