

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT PROPER CARE FOLLOWING CATARACT SURGERY

This information is designed for patients who have been diagnosed as having cataracts and who intend to have cataract surgery. Any surgical procedure contains some element of risk in the post-operative period. For your health and safety, it is imperative that you receive proper follow-up care after your cataract surgery. This fact sheet will explain what follow-up care is, and who should perform it for you.

1. The Need for Follow-Up Care

Before undergoing cataract surgery, your surgeon will ask you to read and sign an Informed Consent form. This form will explain to you the risks involved in cataract surgery and the implantation of intraocular lenses. Please be certain that you read and understand this information thoroughly. You should understand that complications may not necessarily occur during surgery, but may occur after the surgery has been performed. For this reason, it is imperative that you have appropriate care by a qualified eye care professional following your surgery. We call this "follow-up care."

2. What is Follow-Up Care?

After your cataract surgery, you will have several appointments with eye care professionals; they will perform tests to measure your visual acuity and, ultimately, fit you for eyeglasses.

In addition, they will ensure that any post-surgery complications are detected and treated. This series of visits is called your "follow-up care."

3. **Who Should Perform Your Follow-Up Care?**

It is critical that your follow-up care be performed by an eye care professional familiar with your case and qualified to render the necessary care. Several different professionals may "fit the bill." You should understand the roles that different professionals may play in your recovery. These are the eye care professionals who may be involved in your follow-up care:

Your Surgeon:

Your surgeon is a licensed ophthalmologist, a medical doctor who specializes in diseases of the eye. Your surgeon is the most knowledgeable person available to treat problems that might occur during your recovery from surgery. Your surgeon will always see you one day after surgery to remove the eye patch you will be wearing, and to insure that your recovery is progressing normally. Thereafter, if you are not experiencing any problems, you may choose to receive the remainder of your follow-up visits from your surgeon or from another eye care professional. You may always request to receive all your follow-up care from your surgeon. If you choose to receive care from another professional and you experience any

problems relating to your surgery, your surgeon should be informed immediately.

Other Ophthalmologists: If you travel away from home to have surgery and wish to return home soon after surgery, or if you have any other personal reason for not receiving your follow-up care from your surgeon, you may decide to see another ophthalmologist for your follow-up care. An ophthalmologist other than your surgeon can perform all of your follow-up care after your initial visit with your surgeon one day after surgery. However, you must make arrangements with the ophthalmologist before you have your surgery. Your surgeon is concerned about your good health and will only discharge you from his or her care if he or she has confidence in the professional who will supervise your recovery from surgery.

Optometrists: Doctors of Optometry ("optometrists" or "O.D.s") are licensed professionals who have received special training in providing eye care services. They are qualified to provide your follow-up care after the period immediately following your surgery has passed. You may receive this care from, and be fitted for your glasses by your optometrist if you prefer. If problems develop during the post-surgery follow-up period, however, it will be necessary for you to return to your surgeon or another ophthalmologist for care and treatment until the problem has

been resolved. As with ophthalmologists, if you wish to receive follow-up care services from an optometrist, you must make the arrangements with your optometrist and inform your surgeon before your surgery.

4. Summary

Your eye care professional has explained to you what a cataract is and the improvements in your vision that you may enjoy after cataract surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, now is the time to raise them. If you have decided to have your own eye care professional perform your follow-up care, you should fill out the form attached to this fact sheet, have it signed by your eye care professional, and bring it with you to your surgery appointment.

REQUEST FORM

TO: _____
[Insert Your Surgeon's Name]

Dear Doctor:

It is my desire to have Dr. _____, my own [ophthalmologist][optometrist], perform my follow-up care after my cataract surgery. I have discussed this with Dr. _____ and have been told [he][she] is competent to perform the necessary services for me. I have been assured that you will be contacted immediately if I experience any complications related to my cataract surgery.

Dated: _____
_____ [Patient's Signature]

I have agreed to provide follow-up care for _____. I will see the patient ____ days after surgery. Please have the patient call me at _____ to set up an appointment on a date not later than _____.

[Doctor's Signature]