

Cataracts

A cataract is a clouding of the lens of the eye, which causes blurred vision. Cataracts are more common in people over 60 and in people with diabetes.

It is common to have cataracts and age-related macular degeneration (AMD), although the conditions are not linked. While AMD affects central vision, cataract blurs overall sight. Cataracts can also cause glare, difficulty with night-time driving and multiple images in one eye.

A **patient's sight will be tested** using eye drops to make the pupil bigger so the eyes can be examined fully. This will inform treatment recommendations and to determine if surgery is advisable. The drops will blur the vision and the effect of the drops will take a few hours to wear off.

Cataract surgery is usually suitable for patients with dry AMD. It may also be suitable for patients with wet AMD under expert supervision of a consultant ophthalmologist.

Cataract surgery replaces the damaged lens of the eye with an artificial lens. This is usually done under local anaesthetic and as a day case procedure. Your ophthalmologist will advise about possible complications and things to be aware of after surgery.

It is possible that the improvement after surgery for someone with AMD and cataracts may not be significant. The area of vision affected by AMD will still be blurry, but there will be improvement in peripheral vision. General clarity and colour definition will usually be greatly improved as more light gets into the eye after removal of a cataract.

Like any operation there are some risks from surgery, such as infection. Although these risks are small an ophthalmologist may consider the risks of surgery too great in some individuals; for example if someone has no sight in their other eye, or if they have high pressure in their eye from uncontrolled glaucoma.