What is a cataract and how is it treated?

A cataract is when the natural lens in your eye becomes cloudy and dense, causing your vision to deteriorate. Except for unusual situations, cataract surgery is indicated only when you cannot function satisfactorily due to decreased vision. If you decide to have cataract surgery your surgeon will remove the cataract and replace your natural lens with an artificial one. This artificial lens is usually made of plastic, silicone, or acrylic and is surgically and permanently placed inside the eye.

What happens if cataracts go untreated?

Over time, the clouded area of your lens can become larger and thicker, causing your sight to become worse. This could take anywhere from a few months to many years.

How do I know which lens or procedure is best for me?

No single lens or procedure works best for everyone, and only your eye doctor can determine the most appropriate option for you based on your exam, eye health, and lifestyle needs. Bladeless laser cataract surgery with Full range vision and/or Astigmatism reduction can offer less dependence on glasses, optimal vision, and lead to a greater quality of life. Overall, patients who chose bladeless laser cataract surgery over basic cataract have expressed greater satisfaction with their choice.

What type of anesthesia is used during cataract surgery?

Since this procedure does not take very long, it is unnecessary to put you completely asleep with general anesthesia. Instead, your surgeon will use a local/topical anesthetic drop to numb your eye and a mild IV sedation to relax you during the surgery.

Does cataract surgery hurt?

No, cataract surgery is not painful. You will be given mild IV sedation and eye numbing drops to make you comfortable throughout the procedure.

How long will the surgery take and how long will I be at the surgery center?

Most surgeries last between 15 and 30 minutes. Duration may depend on the type of procedure being performed. You will be at the surgery center approximately 2 hours.

Can I have both eyes operated on at the same time?

No typically, doctors will perform surgery on the second eye 2 or 4 weeks after the first eye. All patients are different, so talk to your doctor about what is right for you.
How will removing my cataract affect how I see after cataract surgery?

The goal of cataract surgery is to correct the decreased vision caused by the cataract. When the cataract is removed it must be replaced with an artificial lens. You now have options on the type of procedure and lens that will be implanted. These options can help to correct nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism, and presbyopia. Cataract surgery alone does not correct two common conditions, Presbyopia and Astigmatism, which may cause decreased vision unless combined with advanced technology lenses and/or procedures.

Can I drive myself home after cataract surgery?

No, because you are given anesthesia you will need to make arrangements to have someone drive you home or we offer transportation.

Are there any activities I should avoid immediately after and in the first week after surgery?

It is important that you avoid rubbing your eye or getting anything in your eye, even water, which could increase the chance of infection. You should not wear eye make-up until your doctor tells you that it is okay, and you should avoid sleeping on the side of the eye that has been operated on. You should also avoid any kind of straining or activities that could increase the pressure on your eye, including bending over and lifting heavy objects.

When will I be able to return to my normal activities?

You should be able to return to normal activities within several days and be able to drive and return to work within 2-5 days if you are comfortable with your vision. Remember, however, to always follow the advice of your doctor.

Can a cataract grow back?

No, removing a cataract involves replacing your natural lens with an artificial intraocular lens; you can never "grow" another cataract on the artificial lens. However, you may develop something called a "secondary cataract," which is simply a clouding of the membrane that holds the intraocular lens. This situation is typically treated with a common, painless procedure using a YAG laser. YAG stands for yttrium-aluminum-garnet. A YAG laser is the type of laser used to perform YAG laser capsulotomy, which are necessary when a secondary cataract has developed post-surgery.

What is bladeless cataract surgery?

It is the most advanced cataract surgery technique giving increased accuracy and the ability to correct astigmatism. The lasers 3D analysis, when combined with our surgeons’ expertise, result in a truly customized cataract procedure. When paired with the right lens, laser cataract surgery can dramatically improve your vision at all distances!
**FAQ: CATARACT SURGERY** Feb 2013

**What type of laser is used?**

The LenSx® is a femtosecond laser, which emits cool pulses with durations between a few femtoseconds and hundreds of femtoseconds. For nearly a decade, femtosecond lasers have helped surgeons perform LASIK with unparalleled precision and accuracy. Designed to revolutionize key steps in the cataract procedure, the LenSx® Laser now allows surgeons perform cataract surgery that is more precise, predictable and reproducible.

**Why did Mid Florida Eye Center decide to begin utilizing the LenSx® laser for cataract surgery?**

Mid Florida Eye Center has always been a leading innovator in cataract surgery and we pride ourselves on having the most surgically advanced technology. Our cataract surgeons, Dr. Baumann, Dr. Panzo, and Dr. Charles, understand how to effectively leverage laser technology to achieve the best possible outcomes. When paired with the right lens implant, bladeless laser cataract surgery can dramatically improve vision at all distances.

**What does the LenSx® laser do?**

LenSx® automates the most challenging steps of traditional cataract surgery, such as performing corneal incisions, opening the capsule and softening and breaking up the cataract. Prior to the introduction of this laser, basic cataract surgery involved the creation of several small incisions made manually with a blade. With LenSx®, the surgeon can create those incisions with the laser, resulting in a significantly higher degree of precision. Also the advanced imaging systems provides both real-time video as well as three-dimensional visualization, enabling the surgeons to custom design a treatment plan that is individually tailored for your eyes.

**How much does it cost and will this procedure be covered by insurance?**

Medicare and other insurance carriers cover basic cataract surgery with a basic lens implant but do not cover any advanced technology. LenSx® is an advanced technology procedure not covered by Medicare and other insurances, and will require an out-of-pocket fee from the patient. Patients will receive specific information on the cost of their procedure during the surgery counseling process which may vary depending on which cataract procedure and lens you are a candidate for.

**How many laser procedures have your doctors performed and how long has this technology been around?**

Together our internationally renowned surgeons have performed over 140,000 successful cataract and laser procedures. Femtosecond lasers have been used by ophthalmologists for years, but not until 2009 did the FDA approve a femtosecond laser to be used in cataract surgery. Not all practices are offering this advanced technology to their patients. We are proud to be able to provide this to our patients!