

What a cataract is

The clear natural lens inside your eye becomes cloudy with age. It cannot be reversed with drops, exercises or diet. The only treatment is surgery to replace the lens with a permanent artificial one. Once done, a cataract cannot form again.

When to have surgery

There is no level of vision at which surgery becomes necessary, and national guidance is explicit that access should not be restricted on visual acuity alone. What matters is whether the cataract interferes with what you want to do: night driving, reading, screens, hobbies, going out confidently. If it is not troubling you, waiting is perfectly reasonable.

Your alternatives

Stronger glasses and better lighting help in the earlier stages. NHS cataract surgery is available and is very good. If that pathway suits you, we will say so.

Your lens options

- Monofocal: distance only, fewest optical side effects.
- Enhanced monofocal: adds useful vision at arm's length.
- Extended depth of focus: smooth distance to intermediate range, fewer halos.
- Trifocal: greatest freedom from glasses, most halos.

Toric versions correct astigmatism. A premium lens is a choice, not an upgrade in safety: the operation, the surgeon and the care are identical whichever you choose. Blue Fin Vision® does not use femtosecond laser, because trial evidence and NICE guidance do not support the cost.

Both eyes on the same day

Routine at Blue Fin Vision® since November 2016, performed as two entirely separate operations. The second eye proceeds only if the first has been completely uncomplicated. If it does not proceed and you choose not to go ahead later, that eye's fee is returned in full.

Aftercare

Most patients receive dropless surgery, with the medication delivered inside the eye during the operation and nothing to remember afterwards. Where drops are safer for you, the course is six weeks.

Recovery

- Day of surgery: bright but hazy, mild grittiness. Relax at home.
- Day 1: blurred on waking, clearer through the day. Shower normally.
- Day 2: most patients have returned to their normal routine. Exercise and sport are unrestricted. Most patients can also drive, provided they can read a number plate at 20 metres without glasses.
- Weeks 2 to 6: vision sharpens and settles. Your final glasses prescription is checked at around six weeks.

Helping your brain adapt

If you are having a trifocal or extended depth of focus lens, this matters more than anything else you do. From the day after surgery, set your phone font to the smallest comfortable size, put screen brightness at 50 per cent or above, read on your phone every day, and, at Blue Fin Vision®, do not use reading glasses unless we tell you to.

Main risks

From the national audit of 550 519 cataract operations: capsule rupture during surgery 0.69 per cent, against approximately 0.2 per cent at Blue Fin Vision®. Loss of vision around the time of surgery 0.46 per cent, about 1 in 200. Severe loss of vision 0.17 per cent, about 1 in 500.

Expected side effects

These are not complications. Most patients experience some. The most common with trifocal lenses is halos and starbursts around lights at night, usually settling over three to six months. Mild grittiness and dryness are also common during the early weeks.

Costs

Most insurance policies cover consultation, scans and surgery with a standard monofocal lens, subject to your policy and pre-authorisation. Premium lenses are not funded by insurers, so an upgrade fee applies and is confirmed in writing.

- Self-pay, monofocal or enhanced monofocal: from £4,000 per eye.
- Self-pay, trifocal or extended depth of focus: from £4,500 per eye.
- Sedation, if chosen: £700 per session. A diazepam tablet is free.
- Consultation and scans: £500, prepaid and separate.

VAT exempt. The fee includes 12 months of follow-up, all medication, and management of any complication including vitreoretinal surgery.

Enhancement

With a premium lens, whether self-funded or an insured upgrade, refinement is fully covered by Blue Fin Vision® within 24 months. With insured surgery and a standard monofocal lens it is not included, because the objective is restoring clear vision rather than freedom from glasses.

This page is a summary, not a consent document

It does not replace the full Cataract Surgery patient information booklet, which contains the complete information on risks, alternatives, limitations and aftercare, and which forms part of your informed consent alongside your consultation, your summary letter and your consent form. Please read the full booklet before your consultation. bluefinvision.com/ataract-surgery