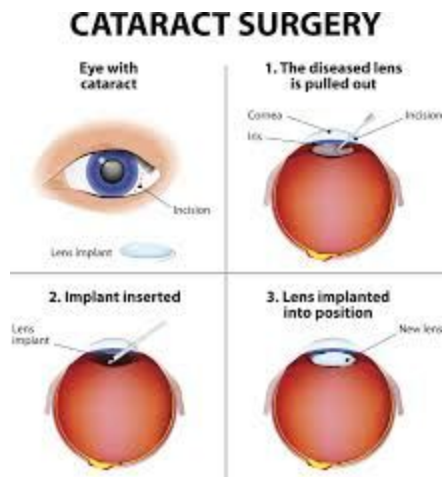


Types of cataract surgery



If you're wondering, there are multiple ways of cataract removal once your eye doctor advises you to take up the surgery. So, let's have a look at them:

Phacoemulsification

Extracapsular Cataract

Surgery

Intracapsular cataract

surgery

i) Phacoemulsification

Also known as 'Phaco', it is the most common technique used for cataract removal nowadays. Usually, it takes

no more than half an hour to remove cataract through phacoemulsification, and that too, requiring only minimal sedation, i.e. local anesthesia (injecting anesthesia around the eye) or topical anesthesia (administering numbing drops into the eye).

This cataract procedure requires a small surgical incision around the edge of

the cornea, creating an opening through the membrane surrounding the lens. The next step involves inserting a small ultrasonic probe into the opening to break up the cloudy lens into tiny fragments using sound waves, which act as a microscopic jack hammer. An attachment on the probe tip is then used for suction of

broken down cataract fragments.

Once the lens particles are removed, an intraocular lens implant, also referred commonly as an IOL, is implanted in the natural lens capsule. A hollowed out tube is used by the ophthalmologists to insert the IOL through a tiny corneal incision.

ii) Extracapsular cataract surgery

This is the cataract procedure used in case of highly advanced cataracts, which is too dense for phacoemulsification (the process of breaking down or dissolving the cataract into tiny fragments) or when phacoemulsification is not

possible for various other reasons.

A slightly larger incision is required for this cataract removing technique, so that the cataract can be removed in one piece instead of being fragmented within the eye. Just like phacoemulsification, an artificial lens (IOL) is placed inside the same capsular bag.

A number of sutures are required to close the comparatively larger wound, which also results in slower recovery of the wound as well as visual function.

To initiate this cataract removal technique, the numbing medication is administered through an injection around the eye. An eye patch is also required

after this kind of surgical process.

iii) Intracapsular cataract surgery

Though rarely used nowadays, this cataract removal technique may still be useful under certain circumstances. It requires an even larger incision as compared to extracapsular surgery, through which the

entire lens with surrounding capsule is removed. Moreover, the IOL (intraocular lens) is placed in a different location, in front of the iris, in this surgical procedure.

Potential cataract surgery complications

Though more than 98% success rate of cataract surgery makes potential

cataract surgery complications a rare incidence, the possibility of certain problems is still there; for example, bleeding or infection (endophthalmitis).

Since every single person with cataract can have varied health conditions, your ophthalmologist is supposed to discuss the specific potential complications of the type of cataract procedure

most feasible for you, requiring your signatures on a consent form.

Some of the most common cataract surgery complications include persistent inflammation, ocular hypertension (also known as elevated intraocular pressure), cystoid macular edema (a condition where retina at the back of the eye is swollen) and

retinal detachment. (You can find a detailed account of potential cataract surgery complications in this publication.)