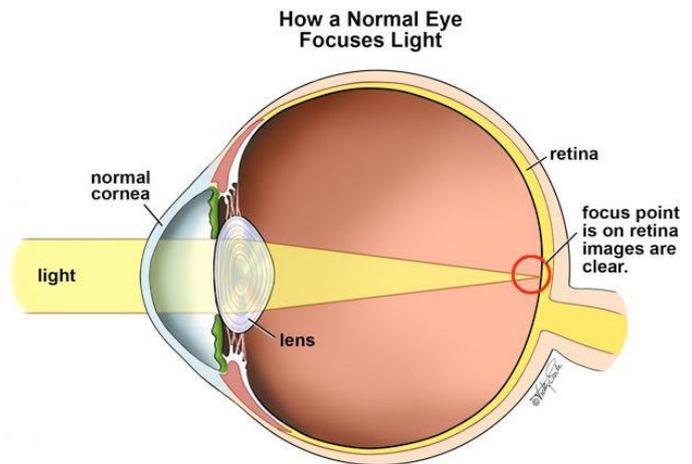


Lens surgery information

A young person with healthy eyes can see well at all distances. The natural focus of the eye is set for distant objects. The lens inside the eye can change shape to focus on close objects. With ageing the natural lens inside the eye loses flexibility so can no longer change shape and the ability to see up close without glasses is lost. The lens can further change so that not even distant objects are in focus, and the lens may become cloudy (cataract). This is why lens replacement surgery is often recommended instead of laser to people in their 40's and older to give a long term stable result. Laser surgery alone treats only the clear window at the front of the eye (cornea) and does not fix the lens inside the eye.



It is not possible to get an artificial lens that changes shape like the natural lens of the eye. To achieve good vision after lens surgery for you your doctor has three options to discuss with you:

Both eyes corrected for distance

This option provides the highest quality vision but will require glasses for everything from arm's length to closer. It is a good option for people who don't mind using reading and computer glasses.

Monovision

This is where one eye is corrected for distance vision and the other for near vision. If your doctor feels this is a better option for you than multifocal lenses then they may suggest a trial with contact lenses to mimic what the focusing would be like after lens surgery.

Multifocal intraocular lenses

These provide a high level of freedom from glasses. However, you will notice rings around lights at night and night vision may not be as good. You may also notice a bit more glare than usual which will mean you may need to wear sunglasses more often. They work quite differently to multifocal glasses so do not be concerned if you have had problems with these before. A half-strength multifocal will usually give good vision from arm's length outwards but glasses are still needed for close reading, however the vision is of higher quality and they have less night vision issue than a full-strength multifocal.

If you have cataracts that are causing issues even with glasses on (eg glare, night driving problems, dim vision) then Medicare or your private health insurance may cover part of the procedure. Whether or not cataract is present the operation is essentially the same. The new artificial lens will last a lifetime.

What to expect

Only one eye is done at a time and the eyes are generally done at least a week apart. The procedure takes about 15 minutes but you will be at the day surgery for about 4 hours. You will not be put to sleep but the eye is made numb by the anaesthetist. You will need to put eyedrops in each eye for 4-6 weeks after the procedure. Most activities can resume on the second day after surgery but you must not swim for two weeks. Due to the healing of your eye the lens may sit in a slightly different position than expected. This may result in things not being in sharp focus afterwards. If this is the case then we may be able to do some laser fine tuning on the cornea afterwards to correct this.