

News for *Spectrum Eye Institute* Cataract Patients

What is a Cataract?

A **cataract** is defined as a clouding of the natural lens of the eye. The lens is about the size of an M & M candy and sits just behind the colored iris in your eye. When you are born, the lens is clear but with time it becomes clouded and your vision gets blurry. A cataract can progress until eventually there is a complete loss of vision in your eye, and neither diet nor laser treatment will make the cataract go away. Cataract surgery can help you restore your vision long before you can experience loss of vision significant enough to interfere with your daily activities.

During cataract surgery, the clouded natural lens is dissolved and replaced with a plastic **intraocular lens (IOL)**. The IOL's used over the last 30 years are called **standard monofocal IOL's** because their focus is set to provide distance or near vision, but **not** both. Patients who receive a standard monofocal IOL usually still need to wear glasses to achieve the clearest focus for distance and near objects because of **astigmatism** and **presbyopia**.

If I have Astigmatism, do I have options?

About half of the population is born with corneas that are shaped in a way which create astigmatism. If you have astigmatism, and you want to see clearly in the distance, you need to wear glasses or contact lenses. Recently, a new style of IOL called a **Toric IOL** was introduced. The Toric IOL can correct, or at least partially correct your naturally occurring corneal astigmatism so you won't be so dependent of glasses to see in the distance after cataract surgery.

What is Presbyopia? What are my choices?

With time, almost everyone is affected by presbyopia. Presbyopia is a part of the normal aging process and happens to all of us. Presbyopia is caused by the loss of flexibility of the natural lens and the weakening of the lens's focusing muscle. It becomes evident to most of us at about age 45 and that's why we have to start wearing reading glasses or need to begin wearing bifocals. We just can't see up close without them. Everyone who undergoes cataract surgery with a standard monofocal IOL needs to have reading glasses to see up close afterward because presbyopia is *not* treated by the standard monofocal IOL. But over the past few years, there have been several IOL's introduced which correct presbyopia after cataract surgery. Patients who choose one of these presbyopia correcting IOL's or **Multifocal lens** can usually see far away and up close without glasses.

Your options with or without Medicare?

Depending on the results of your examination, you may have the option to choose a Toric IOL, or a presbyopia correcting IOL (Multifocal IOL) or you may choose a standard monofocal IOL. There is nothing wrong with electing the standard monofocal IOL, in fact some of our patients select this option either because they are not good candidates for the newer IOL's or they don't want to pay the additional costs associated with these technologies which *Medicare and insurance don't cover*. But the good news is you now have some options, **not wearing glasses after cataract surgery is important to you!**

We thank you for reading this introduction. During your visit you'll have the opportunity to hear more about these choices to make your vision better. We look forward to discussing these options with you.