

Cataracts Leading Cause of Vision Loss

Cataracts are the leading cause of vision loss in the United States, and the leading cause of blindness in the world. I am certain that we all know at least one person that has cataracts or has had cataract surgery. In the United States, over 24 million people are affected over the age of 40, with over 3 million people having cataract surgery every year.

The majority of people that develop cataracts are age related. When we are young, the lens that sits just behind the iris inside our eye is perfectly transparent and is responsible for all of the work to focus from distance to near. As we age the lens starts to become cloudy and we begin to develop cataracts, which in turn affects our vision.

While the majority of cataracts are age related, some cataracts can be caused by other factors such as diabetes mellitus, specific drugs and medications, smoking, UV radiation, trauma, alcohol or nutritional deficiency. Rarely, cataracts can be present at

birth.

So what symptoms will you have when you start to develop cataracts? Most people start to notice their vision is becoming more blurred. Sometimes, the cataract causes your glasses prescription to change. People also experience increased glare, especially at night time when driving. Most patients also find they need increased lighting when reading a book or a newspaper.

Recent studies have shown that healthy eating habits can delay the development of cataracts. Diets that are high in vitamins C and E, as well as high in the carotenoids lutein and zeaxanthin, have been credited for protecting against cataracts. Eating almonds or sunflower seeds are great sources of vitamin E, and orange or grapefruit juice for vitamin C. You can find lutein and zeaxanthin in green leafy vegetables such as spinach, kale and collard greens. These foods are also proven to protect against macular degeneration.



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Dr. Rosemary Emmick
Dr. Mary Beth Emmick

When you have your annual eye examination, your eye doctor will look for any signs of cataracts. If they become advanced enough, you and your doctor will decide together when it is an appropriate time to have cataract surgery. Fortunately, technology has advanced and cataract surgery has improved over the years. Your surgeon will make a small incision in the cornea to remove the cataract and replace it with a perfectly clear lens. The procedure is now typically performed in an outpatient setting and you go home to sleep in your own bed at night! There are also many options to improve your lifestyle when you have cataract surgery that may include advanced lens implants to help with near vision. Your doctor will help you decide which options are best for you when the time comes.

After you have cataract surgery, you can quickly return to normal activities. Your doctor will discuss with you what can be expected after the procedure. If you have any questions about cataracts or cataract surgery, be sure to ask your doctor at your next annual eye examination.

—Mary Beth Emmick, O.D.

Silver Achievement Quality Award

Willowdale Village staff is pleased to announce receiving a national award for providing quality service to seniors in the Dale area.



The *Silver-Achievement in Quality Award* is given for dedication to improving the lives of residents through quality care. It comes from the American Health Care Association and National Center for Assisted Living (AHCA/NCAL) as part of their National Quality Award Program.

Operated by American Senior Communities, Willowdale Village, located at 404 West Willow Road, is one of 11 communities operated by ASC being recognized this year by AHCA/NCAL for quality service. Of the 5 nursing communities in Indiana receiving the Silver Award, three are operated by ASC.

The other ASC communities receiving the Silver Award are Bethlehem Woods Nursing and Rehabilitation in Fort Wayne and American Village in Indianapolis. Receiving the Bronze Award are: Lowell Healthcare, North Park Nursing Center in Evansville; Brownsburg Meadows, Washington Healthcare Center, Rosewalk Village at Indianapolis and Fairway Village, all in the Indianapolis area; Clinton Gardens and Westview Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, Bedford.



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“MAC provides and coordinates social activities and services for seniors that enhance dignity, improve independence and encourage community involvement.



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