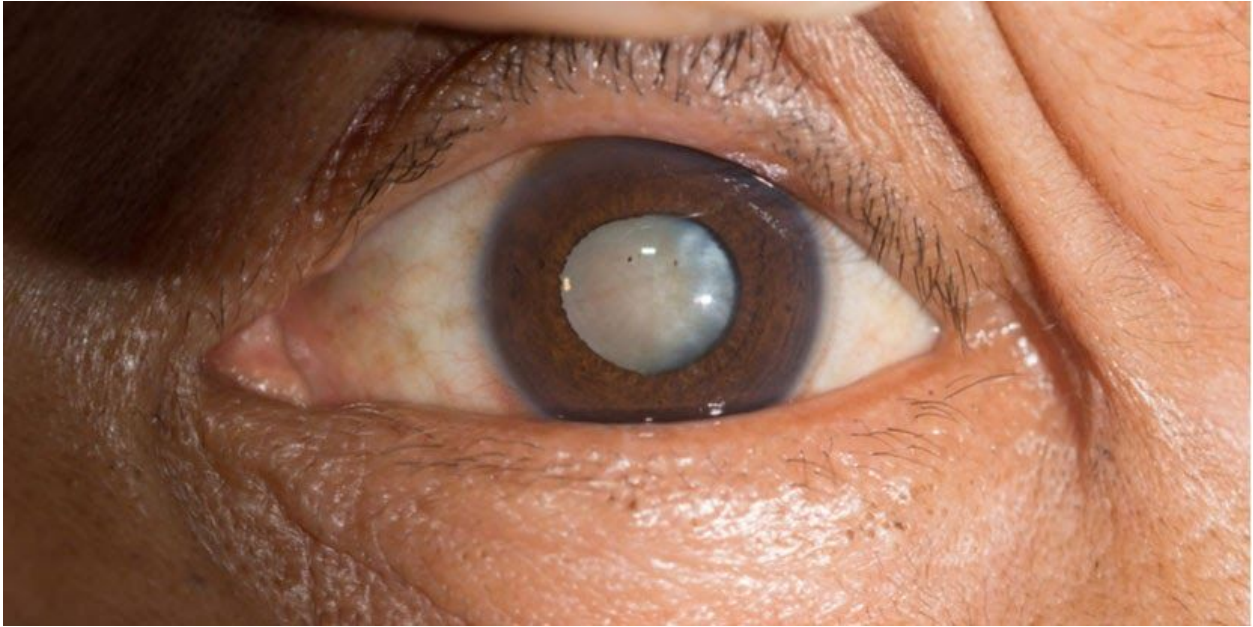


# What Are Cataracts?



Inside our eyes, we have a natural [lens](#). The lens bends (refracts) light rays that come into the eye to help us see. The lens should be clear, like the top lens in the illustration.

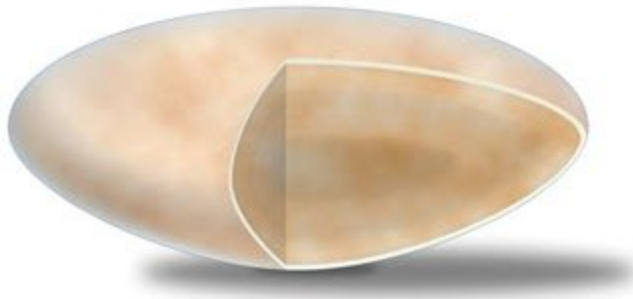
## Vision Problems with Cataracts

If you have a [cataract](#), your lens has become cloudy, like the bottom lens in the illustration. It is like looking through a foggy or dusty car windshield. Things look blurry, hazy or less colorful with a cataract.

Clear lens



Cloudy lens



## Cataracts Symptoms

Here are some vision changes you may notice if you have a cataract:

- Having [blurry vision](#)
- [Seeing double](#) (when you see two images instead of one)
- Being extra [sensitive to light](#)
- Having [trouble seeing well at night](#), or needing more light when you read
- Seeing bright colors as faded or yellow instead

If you notice any of these cataract symptoms, notify your ophthalmologist.



*Cataracts can make images appear dull or yellow.*



*Blurry or dim vision is a symptom of cataracts.*



*Cataracts can cause distortion or ghost images.*

See a [simulation of what vision with cataract looks like](#).

## What Causes Cataracts?

Aging is the most common cause. This is due to normal eye changes that happen starting around age 40. That is when normal proteins in the lens start to break down. This is what causes the lens to get cloudy. People over age 60 usually start to have some clouding of their lenses. However, vision problems may not happen until years later.

Other reasons you may get cataracts include:

- having parents, brothers, sisters, or other family members who have cataracts
- having certain medical problems, such as [diabetes](#)
- smoking
- having had an [eye injury](#), eye surgery, or radiation treatments on your upper body
- having spent a lot of time in the [sun](#), especially without [sunglasses that protect your eyes from damaging ultraviolet \(UV\) rays](#)
- using certain medications such as [corticosteroids](#), which may cause early formation of cataracts.

Most age-related cataracts develop gradually. Other cataracts can develop more quickly, such as those in younger people or those in people with [diabetes](#). Doctors cannot predict how quickly a person's cataract will develop.

**You may be able to slow down your development of cataracts.**

[Protecting your eyes from sunlight](#) is the best way to do this. Wear [sunglasses](#) that screen out the sun's ultraviolet (UV) light rays. You may also wear regular [eyeglasses](#) that have a clear, anti-UV coating. Talk with your eye doctor to learn more.

Source: <https://www.aao.org/eye-health/diseases/what-are-cataracts>