

# What Is a Posterior Capsulotomy?



Written By: [Kierstan Boyd](#)

Reviewed By: [Stephen N Lipsky MD](#)

Oct. 29, 2020

Posterior capsulotomy is laser surgery you might need sometime after [cataract surgery](#). It helps you see clearly if your vision becomes cloudy again.

When you have cataract surgery, your ophthalmologist removes your eye's cloudy [lens](#). They replace it with a clear, artificial [intraocular lens \(IOL\)](#). The IOL is held in place in the eye's natural [lens capsule](#). Weeks, months or years later, this capsule can become cloudy or wrinkled, causing blurry vision. This is called a posterior capsule opacification (PCO). It's also sometimes called a "secondary cataract" or "scar tissue." With posterior capsulotomy, a laser is used to make an opening in the cloudy capsule. This allows light to pass through again for clear vision.

## What Happens During Posterior Capsulotomy?

The procedure is done in your ophthalmologist's office. It only takes about 5 minutes. Here is what will happen:

- Your eye will be numbed with [eye drops](#). You may be given other eye drops as well to [dilate your pupil](#).
- Your ophthalmologist will point a special laser at the back of the lens capsule and make a small opening.
- After the procedure, usually you can do all your normal daily activities, including driving. Your ophthalmologist will tell you if there are things you should not do right after surgery.
- You may need to use eye-drop medicine for one week after the surgery. Your ophthalmologist will let you know if this is necessary.
- If you have no other eye problems affecting your vision, your sight should improve in about 24 hours.

## What Are the Risks of Posterior Capsulotomy?

As with any surgery, there are possible risks and complications with posterior capsulotomy. Here are some of them:

- You may have a [detached retina](#) (where the tissue lifts from the back of your eye). You may see what looks like a gray curtain moving across your field of vision. You might also see a lot of [floaters](#). You should call your ophthalmologist immediately if this happens to your vision.
- The [pressure in your eye](#) may increase.
- The IOL might move through the posterior capsule opening.
- You may have swelling in your eye, and you may need [steroid](#) eye drops.

Sources: <https://www.aaopt.org/eye-health/treatments/what-is-posterior-capsulotomy>