

Clear Help For Cataracts

This is the second in a series about "the aging eye," covering common problems like cataracts, glaucoma and dry eye.

Even if you're blessed with a bright outlook on life, the world can start looking cloudy and gray as you get older. One of the prime causes is a natural aging of the crystalline lens of the eye—a condition known as cataracts.

As a person ages, the lens of the eye can start to turn yellow, like a sheet of newsprint left in the sun. As the lens becomes more opaque, problems arise such as blurry vision, sensitivity to light or glare, double vision in one eye, frequent changes in eyeglass prescriptions, difficulty reading in low light, poor night vision, and a fading or yellowing of colors.

A Problem for Millions

Many factors can contribute to cataracts, including family history, medical problems such as a previous eye injury, diabetes, high salt intake, certain medications, smoking, alcohol, and exposure to ultra-violet rays from sunlight or industrial sources.

According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology more than 20 million Americans over the age of 40 already have cataracts. By the time they turn 65, more than half of adults will have a cataract, and by 70, the incidence of cataracts increases to about 90 percent.

New Options, Better Cures

While the natural lens clouding can't be reversed, the lens itself can be replaced with an intraocular lens implant (IOL), in a brief outpatient procedure. With a growing population of "baby boomers," the demand for better solutions is on the rise; recently, the FDA approved the first "accommodative" IOL, a new hinged lens that improves focusing, allowing patients to see objects clearly from close up, at middle distance or far away—often eliminating the need for contacts or glasses entirely.

Another option, the multifocal intraocular lens (IOL), is an implant similar to trifocals or progressive-power glasses or contacts and is available only through the research department at Minnesota Eye Consultants. The lens provides varying degrees of visual correction, which also enables patients to focus on objects at different distances. "The potential for these IOL's to restore functional vision at all distances is a marked improvement over conventional cataract lens replacements," said Dr. Jason Stowe of Minnesota Eye Consultants in Sandstone.

Minnesota Eye Consultants is known internationally for its role in advancing research and treatment of presbyopia, cataracts, glaucoma, dry eye and many other vision problems. Fortunately, these physicians perform cataract surgery right here in Sandstone.

Free Vision Seminars

To learn more plan to attend the second in the vision seminar series presented by Dr. Jason Stowe. This free educational presentation will be held on: **May 23, 2005 at 12:00 p.m. at the Minnesota Eye Consultants Sandstone office - 109 Court Avenue, Sandstone,** and will give an in depth look at Cataracts and the current and upcoming options available to treat this condition.

For information, visit **mneye.com** or call **(320) 245-2637**.



Jason Stowe, O.D. specializes in the diagnosis and management of glaucoma and ocular disease, primary care services, laser vision correction and cataract surgery co-management, urgent care services and contact lens fittings. Dr. Jason Stowe sees patients in the Minnesota Eye Consultants office of Sandstone.