

# Vision imbalance (anisometropia) after cataract surgery

Information for patients





# What is anisometropia?

Cataract surgery involves replacing the natural lens of the eye with an artificial one. This means that there is the opportunity to change the glasses you wear after your operation by choosing a particular strength of artificial lens to suit your eye.

If you are normally strongly short-sighted or long-sighted, we can dramatically reduce the strength of prescription glasses you will need after your operation. However, as we usually do the operation on one eye at a time, this means that your eyes will be out of balance with each other until after the operation on your second eye. This vision imbalance is called anisometropia.

## Choice of lens

We will discuss this with you at your pre-operative assessment appointment before your surgeon chooses the most appropriate lens for you. The choice of lens depends on the vision in your other eye and whether it also has a cataract; and on your needs in terms of work, daily activities etc.

The final choice of lens can usually be altered at any point up to your operation, including on the day itself. However, some types of lens need to be ordered in advance and in this case the choice needs to be made at the pre-operative assessment stage. We will let you know if this applies to you.

# Coping with symptoms of imbalance

It may be a couple of months before you have the operation on your second eye. People vary as to how much difficulty they experience during this time. If you usually wear contact lenses, the symptoms can be avoided by continuing to use one for the non-operated eye.

## Symptoms can include:

- difficulty with 3D vision and judging distances (e.g. judging steps, pouring liquids, picking up objects)
- double vision or different size images from each eye
- problems with balance

# Suggestions for coping with anisometropia

Most people cope perfectly well and continue as normal. The following suggestions may be helpful:

- Plan to have a quiet few days following your operation to give you time to get used to your vision.
- Take care and time performing daily activities and be aware that things may look different compared to before your operation.
- Use whatever glasses feel most comfortable, or none at all. Some patients ask their optician to remove the lens temporarily on the side that has had the surgery, but this may make the symptoms more noticeable. It is not usually worth updating glasses until after the second operation. Cheap reading glasses from bookshops or chemists may be helpful and are worth trying - though they won't match both eyes.
- It may be more comfortable to only use one eye during this time by allowing the vision to be blurred or blocked out on one side.
- Driving is usually not advisable during this time but this depends on the vision in your other eye. We can advise you about driving on the day of your operation and at your post-operative check-up.
- At your pre-operative assessment we will discuss with you any specific work or activities that you should avoid.

# Second operation

If your first eye is healing well your second operation will be arranged at your first post-operative check-up appointment.

# Further information and how to contact us

The information in this leaflet will be discussed with you during your pre-operative assessment appointment. If you have any questions, or if there is anything you are unsure about, please ask a nurse or doctor at any of your visits. Your optician may also be able to give you advice. Alternatively you may contact:

At the Oxford Eye Hospital:

**Pre-operative Assessment Nurses**

Tel: Oxford (01865) 231117 or 231095

OR

At the Horton Hospital:

**Eye Outpatients**

Tel: Banbury (01295) 229606

If you require this document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** stating your requirements. When we receive your call we may transfer you to an interpreter. This can take some time, so please be patient.

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