

## Ophthalmology – Cataract Surgery

### Introduction

Every healthy eye should have in it a clear natural lens to help focussing. Cataracts are when the lens of your eye develops cloudy patches. If your optician has confirmed that you have cataracts you will be referred to a specialist eye doctor for an assessment. Cataract surgery involves replacing the cloudy lens inside your eye with an artificial one. At the assessment your doctor will discuss cataract surgery with you in detail and whether this is the right option for you. Please find link below for useful informative videos regarding cataracts.

<https://healthandcarevideos.uk/eyes/66071>

### Guidance for Patients

Whilst you are waiting for your procedure, it is important to maintain a healthy lifestyle. St Helens Wellbeing service makes it easier to access a wide range of healthy living and wellbeing support through a 'one stop shop'. The service provides local residents with advice and help with healthy eating, exercise, weight management, stopping smoking, breastfeeding, emotional and social wellbeing, oral health and volunteering.

**Call:** 01744 371111

**Email:** [chcp.sthelens@nhs.net](mailto:chcp.sthelens@nhs.net)

**Website:** [www.sthelenswellbeing.org.uk](http://www.sthelenswellbeing.org.uk)

### Find out your BMI

You can get help to lead a healthier lifestyle if you're an adult (18 years or over) living in St Helens and your body mass index (BMI) is above average. St Helens Wellbeing service are offering a free weight loss programme with personalised ongoing support if your BMI is between 30-39.9, to help you get fitter and healthier. Use the below tool to calculate your BMI.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/bmi-calculator>

### Make the most out of your sight

If you have reduced vision, there are several simple changes you can make that will help you to make the most of your sight whilst you are awaiting surgery:

1. **Lighting** – having lighting that is directed onto the task or around trip hazards can make a big difference to how well you see. Avoid bright unshaded central room lights and use blinds and net curtains to shield

## My Planned Care Patient Information Platform

you from bright sunshine. Sitting with your back to the window when reading also helps to make the most of the sunlight.

2. **Magnification** – simple low powered magnifiers or magnifiers on your mobile devices can help with small print and instructions on packaging. Usually it is better to have these prescribed by an optician or low vision clinic practitioner, so if your local optician is available, call them for advice.

3. **TV Audio Description** – if you are struggling to enjoy TV programmes because of your vision, try enabling audio description (AD). Audio description describes what is happening on screen so that you don't miss any of the detail of the programmes which is important.

4. **Trip hazards** – it is important that you have a look around your home and environment to think about what might cause you potential trips and falls. This includes rugs, uneven surfaces, steps or stairs that are not marked clearly.

5. **Medication** – if you are struggling to see your medication packages, speak to your pharmacist to explain the situation and they will be able to dispense your medication safely. If you are diabetic, speak to your diabetic nurse to make sure you have equipment appropriate to monitoring and treating your condition that you are able to see or that has an audio alternative.

6. **Correspondence/post** – notify your service providers that you require bills or correspondence in large print so that you don't miss anything important.

## What should I do if my health is deteriorating?

Cataracts generally cause a gradually progressive reduction in sight, any sudden reduction in sight or other symptoms such as flashing lights, floaters, a localised blind spot/shadow in your peripheral vision, distortion of your central vision particularly when looking at straight lines or redness or pain in your eyes would not be caused by cataract. If you experience any of these symptoms while waiting, you will need to seek help soon from your GP or optician.

### Urgent Health Advice

For urgent health advice about physical or mental health, when it's not an emergency, please call 111 from any landline or mobile phone. You can also visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk). The NHS 111 service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

### Life Threatening Emergencies

For something life threatening – severe bleeding, breathing difficulties or chest pains – please dial 999