



## What you should know

# Do you know the signs of cataracts?

When you have a cataract, the normally clear lens of the eye becomes cloudy. This makes seeing difficult. Cataracts can form very slowly. The first signs can be:

- > Clouded vision
- > Glaring or sensitivity to bright light
- > Poor night vision
- > Faded color vision
- > Double or multiple vision in one eye
- > Frequent changes in prescriptions for eyeglasses or contact lenses

Usually cataracts are related to aging. More than 17% of Americans ages 40 and older have a cataract in one or both eyes. More than half of all Americans ages 80 and older have cataracts.<sup>2</sup> Other causes can be:

- > Using cigarettes or alcohol
- > Eye injuries
- > Excessive sun (UV) exposure
- > Certain medications
- > Diabetes

### Quick fact:

Cataract removal is one of the most common, safe and effective operations performed in the United States.<sup>1</sup>

There are steps you can take to reduce your risk of cataracts.

- > Wear visors and sunglasses that provide 100% UV protection
- > Don't smoke
- > Avoid secondhand cigarette smoke
- > If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation
- > Eat more foods with high levels of antioxidants or take antioxidant vitamins
- > Keep conditions, like diabetes, under control
- > Visit your eye doctor for comprehensive eye exams

Your eye doctor can exam you to see if cataracts are the cause of your symptoms.

Stronger eyeglass lenses, lenses with anti-reflective coating or stronger lighting while reading may help in the early stages. If cataracts make it hard to read, drive or watch TV, you may need surgery. The cloudy lens may be replaced with an artificial one.

Talk to your eye doctor about how to prevent cataracts, and visit [myspectera.com](http://myspectera.com) for more information.

**Ask your eye doctor about what you can do to prevent cataracts. And if you already have symptoms, ask what you can do to see more clearly.**

<sup>1</sup> [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

<sup>2</sup> American Academy of Ophthalmology ([www.geteyesmart.org](http://www.geteyesmart.org))

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