



EXCELLENCE IN OPHTHALMOLOGY | Dr. Frederick Ho

EYE CARE Q&A

Safety and Quality of Life Benefits of Cataract Surgery

What is a cataract and how is it treated?

A cataract is a clouding of the natural lens in the eye. It is usually the result of aging which causes proteins in the eye to break down and clump together, affecting the clarity of visual images on the retina.

When the cataract causes significant visual disability, having it surgically removed is the best option. After the cloudy lens is removed, an intraocular lens is implanted. The lens implant can either be a standard monofocal lens or new options of multifocal or toric lenses.

What are the benefits of cataract surgery?

Many outcome studies have demonstrated that cataract surgery not only improves vision but also enhances quality of life. Research is currently accumulating evidence on safety and possible cognitive benefits for elders.

What are the safety benefits of cataract surgery?

Cataract surgery to improve vision has decreased the risk of falling, of hip fractures and of being in a car accident. Perhaps the most striking outcome is that the oldest patients benefited most from cataract removal.

Why is that noteworthy?

Half the people over 80 fall each year. Many of them are admitted to hospitals and nursing homes. Of those admitted to nursing homes, many never return home. Following cataract surgery, research study patients experienced 16 – 23% fewer hip fractures than a comparable group who chose not to have cataract surgery (in the same 12 month period). The greatest reduction of hip fractures occurred in patients 80 and older. The group that most needed to benefit from cataract surgery did so.

Are there other safety benefits associated with cataract surgery?

Research studies from Australia found removing cataracts reduced car crashes. The Australian study examined the relationship of cataract surgery and car crashes of 30,000 surgeries over nine years. There were 13% fewer crashes among elderly patients who had cataract surgery with intraocular lens implants compared to cataract patients who chose not to have surgery.

What else is being studied regarding cataract surgery and the elderly?

A study is in progress focusing on the relationship between cataract removal and the life quality improvements in Alzheimer's patients. Alzheimer's disease and cataracts are both age-related so it's not unusual for both conditions to be present in an elderly patient.

How will this information influence ophthalmology?

We will have solid evidence that aside from improving vision, cataract surgery improves social and physical functioning. Elderly patients and their families considering cataract surgery can be advised that the procedure is especially beneficial for older patients; proven to improve the overall quality of their life in addition to restoring their vision.

Dr. Frederick Ho is a board certified ophthalmologist specializing in cataract surgery, multifocal lens implants, laser surgery, diabetic eye disease, glaucoma and macular degeneration as well as the full spectrum of vision disorders. He is also recognized for his expertise in pediatric ophthalmology and strabismus surgery.

Dr. Ho has been named a Top Doctor in the U.S. by Consumer's Guide to Top Doctors and a Top Ophthalmologist by the Consumer's Research Council of America. He has earned a Super Service Award from Angie's List and a Health Grades Recognized Physician Award.

Dr. Ho is the medical director of Atlantic Eye MD and Atlantic Surgery and Laser Center, a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and the American Academy of Ophthalmology.

Dr. Ho's office is conveniently located at 8040 N. Wickham Road in Melbourne.

To make an appointment please call (321) 757-7272.

To learn more about the personalized eye care of Dr. Frederick Ho, visit his internet site at www.AtlanticEyeMD.com.