



RETAINED LENS MATERIAL AFTER CATARACT SURGERY

In some cases, a cataract cannot be removed completely, and some of the lens material is left behind within the eye.

If the amount of retained lens material is small, it may dissolve spontaneously. If there is a large amount of lens material left behind, or if the eye develops problems with elevated pressure or severe inflammation, a second procedure can be performed to remove the lens material and help restore vision.

This surgery, called a vitrectomy, involves making tiny incisions in the white part of the eye (the sclera). Microsurgical instruments are used to suction the lens material from inside the eye. The vitreous gel—which fills the back of the eye—is also removed in order to completely clean out all of the lens material and associated inflammatory debris. A special saline solution is instilled into the eye as the vitreous and lens material are aspirated.

If necessary, an intraocular lens can be implanted at the time of the vitrectomy, or the position of an existing lens implant can be adjusted.

After surgery, the vision often will remain somewhat blurred as the eye continues to heal. In most cases, patients requiring surgery for retained lens material experience very good visual acuity. Less frequently complications such as swelling of the retina, persistent elevation of eye pressure, or persistent inflammation can occur. Your doctor will monitor carefully for these conditions following surgery, and most can be treated successfully with medication.