

Cataracts in children – 8-12s

The proper name is...

Congenital Cataract

But we often call it...

Childhood Cataract

Intro

Your pupil is the small black circle in the centre of your eye. Just behind it, inside your eye, is a lens which helps you see clearly. The lens should be clear like glass. But a cataract (pronounced *cat-ar-act*) makes the lens cloudy.

How does the world look to me?

If you have cataracts as a baby or a child you may not realise it. You might think your eyesight is normal and that everyone sees things the way you do. But cataracts usually make your vision less clear and in some children the vision may be very blurry.

How do I look to the world?

Sometimes the pupil of the eye can become white and cloudy if a cataract is not treated but often your cataract can't be noticed by other people.

How did I get it?

In the UK it is normally older people over the age of 50 who have cataracts, and children rarely get them. But if you do have a cataract, it could be because one of your parents had them too when they were young. On the other hand, there may be no real reason and you just developed a cataract by chance.

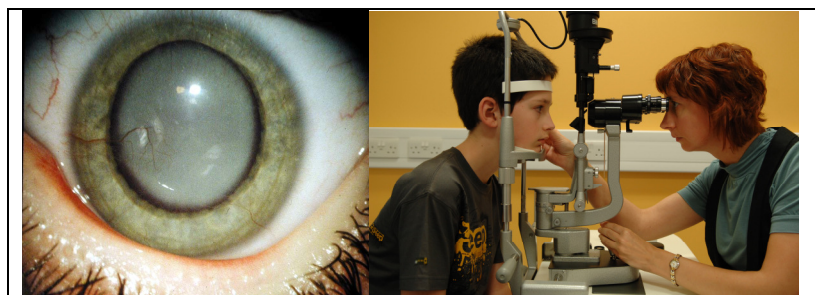
Did you know?

Cats get cataracts too!

How can the doctor tell?

Usually you will have eye tests when you are a baby. The tests will show if you already have a cataract at that age. It is important to have your eyes checked regularly as you get older. An optician can quickly tell if you have cataracts, even if you or your parents have never noticed anything wrong.

If an optician thinks you have a cataract you will be sent to an eye hospital to have your eyes examined by eye doctors (ophthalmologists) using a slitlamp. They may also use a test called an ultrasound to show what the inside of your eye looks like.



A cataract

Examining the eyes with a
slitlamp

Getting it sorted

It is important that children with cataracts are examined as early as possible. If they are affecting the vision badly, they can be treated by having an operation. During the operation the lens in your eye will be removed and may be replaced with a new one.

Getting Better

After the operation it may take a while for your vision to improve.

Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust

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Phone: 020 7253 3411

www.moorfields.nhs.uk

Moorfields Direct Telephone Helpline

Phone: 020 7566 2345

Monday to Friday 09.00 to 16.30 for further information and advice.

Credits

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