A guide to
Cataract Surgery

A patient-friendly booklet for: ______________________

This booklet will help you understand and be prepared for your surgery. Please read it with your nurse and family. Please bring this booklet with you on the day of your surgery.
This document was developed with the nurses of the Lachine Hospital Ophthalmology Clinic and was reviewed by medical specialists in eye surgery (Ophthalmology).

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**IMPORTANT: PLEASE READ**

Information provided by this booklet is for educational purposes. It is not intended to replace the advice or instruction of a professional healthcare practitioner, or to substitute medical care. Contact a qualified healthcare practitioner if you have any questions concerning your care.

This document is available on MUHC Heath Education Collection Site (http://infotheque.muhc.ca/) and on MUHC Patient Education Office Site (http://www.muhcpatienteducation.ca/).
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What is a cataract?

Your eye is made up mostly of water and proteins. As your eye ages, certain proteins can stick together and begin to make cloudy areas in your eye. This prevents light from reaching your retina and causes a loss of vision (visual acuity). We call this a cataract.

Most of the time, cataracts develop slowly. A cataract can take months even years to affect your vision.

What is cataract surgery?

Nowadays, the removal of cataracts is usually performed on an out-patient basis that, is to say as a “day surgery”. It is performed under local or topical anesthesia (with drops in your eyes). You will be fully awake but you will feel relaxed and will not feel any pain.
The surgery lasts about 20 minutes. Only a few hours pass between the time you enter the surgery room and when you are back home.

To remove the cataract, your surgeon will use a technique called phacoemulsification. To do this, your surgeon makes a small cut (incision) of less than 3 mm on your cornea then inserts a small tube. A lens is then inserted in your eye, through the small incision.

Because your surgery is done through a very small incision, your eye heals quickly and you have little or no discomfort.

**What is “day surgery”?**

A “Day Surgery” procedure means that you come to the hospital the day of your surgery and you go home a few hours after the surgery. You must make sure you have someone with you because you cannot drive. You must have somebody with you even if you take a taxi or public transportation.

During you first visit after surgery, your doctor will tell you when you may drive.
Speak up…

You must sign a consent form before surgery. Your signature means that you give permission to the surgeon to perform the surgery. All patients are encouraged to ask questions before signing the consent form.

Before signing your consent form, your surgeon should give you enough information so you can make an informed decision. It is not necessary to know all the little details of your surgery. You only need the information to make the best decision possible. This information should include the benefits and risks associated with surgery.

Before your surgery

Once the decision has been taken to remove your cataract, your doctor will ask you to have different tests before your surgery. These tests will determine the most suitable lens to use.

Several options for lenses are available. You and your doctor will decide what is the best option for you.
Preparing for your surgery

Before any surgery, it is important that your body be in best health possible. Exercise is important. If you are already exercising, keep up the good work. If you are not, start slowly adding exercise into your day.

• Exercise does not need to be strenous to be helpful. In fact, a 15 minute walk is much better than not doing any exercise.

• We strongly suggest you **stop smoking** completely before your surgery, as this will reduce the risk of lung problems afterwards. Your doctor or pharmacist can give you some medication to help you quit smoking.

• **Do not drink alcohol 24 hours before surgery.** Alcohol can interact with some medications. Please let us know if you need help decreasing your alcohol use before surgery or talk to your doctor.
Plan ahead; make sure that everything is ready for you when you go home after your surgery. You may need the help of your friends or family for the first 24 hours.

You must have someone with you on:

• the day of your surgery,
• your visit to your doctor the day after your surgery, and
• your appointment the week after.

The Admitting Department will call you 1-2 weeks in advance to tell you the date of your surgery.

Two days before your surgery

The Admitting Department will confirm the time you should arrive at the hospital before your surgery. They will call you between 3:00 and 9:00 pm 2 days before your surgery.

Note that the time that you should arrive at the hospital is not the same time as your surgery.

If you have not received a call 24 hours before your surgery, call the Admitting Department at (514) 934-1934 ext. 77155

Date of your surgery:_______________________________________________

Arrival time at the hospital:_________________________________________

For any additional information, please contact the Day Care Surgery nurses at (514) 934-1934, ext. 77693, from Monday to Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Cancelling your surgery

If you need to cancel your surgery, please call the Admitting Department at 514-934-1934 ext. 77155 as soon as possible.

If your health gets worse in the days before your surgery, please contact the Ophthalmology Service at 514-934-1934, ext. 77294, to decide if your surgery needs to be delayed.

Please keep in mind that your surgery may need to be delayed or cancelled because of an emergency. Your surgery will be rescheduled as soon as possible.
Things to bring to the hospital

• This booklet
• Your valid Medicare card
• Your medication and eye drops
• Slippers
• Sunglasses

If you do not speak French or English, please bring someone who can translate for you.

Please leave all jewelry and objects of value at home. The hospital is not responsible for any lost or stolen articles.
The day of surgery

At home:

Take a shower or a bath. Wear loose-fitting clothes that are easy to put on.

Do not wear any creams, lotions or perfume.

Do not wear make-up or nail polish.

Remove all jewelry and leave it at home.

Take your medication with a light lunch. You can take any form of anticoagulant (blood thinner medication) and put in your drops for glaucoma, if needed.
At the hospital

You must report to Reception and Admissions Department, window #7, on the 1st floor at scheduled time written on page 8.

You will then be directed to Accounting to pay for your lens. You may pay with: cash, credit card or cheque.

You will then be redirected to the Day Surgery Unit on the 6th floor.

On the Day Surgery Unit, the nurse will help you prepare for your surgery.

She will:

• Explain the steps of the day.

• Have you change into a hospital gown.

• Make sure that your personal items are in safe place.

• Put drops in your eyes to prepare your eye for surgery.

• Put a small tube into your vein (intravenous) to give you medications during your surgery, if needed.
When everything is ready, you will be transported on your stretcher to the surgery room where your doctor will perform your surgery on the same stretcher.

**The waiting room**

Family and friends can wait for you in the **family waiting area** located in the B wing, 6th floor, (6B8), or by the bed that is assigned to you.

Our space is small, so we ask that you please limit the number or people coming with you.
After your surgery

You will return to the Day Surgery Unit where a nurse will take care of you.

You may receive juice and cookies.

Before you leave the hospital, the nurse will meet with you and give you an information pamphlet. This pamphlet will give information about how to take care of yourself after your surgery.

It is very important to follow the instructions in the information pamphlet and do not hesitate to ask us questions.

The nurse will explain how to:

- Remove the eye shield on _____________, or
- Keep wearing the eye shield until your next appointment with your doctor.

Wear the eye shield on your operated eye at bedtime and during the day if you take a nap, for 1 to 2 weeks.

Begin using the drops on ______. Always wait for 5 minutes inbetween using different kind of drops.
Change your prescription glasses in the weeks after your surgery because your eyesight might change. Talk with your doctor about this during your first visit.

Activities: You can read, watch television, play on your computer, walk, cycle, and go to the movies or restaurants. Your doctor will tell you if you can drive at your next appointment.

Do not lift objects weighting more than 10 pounds/ 4.5 kilos (equivalent to a bag of potato) for 1 month.

Do not wear make-up on the operated eye for 1 or 2 weeks.
Do not rub the operated eye even you feel the urge to scratch. Do not force your eyelid to close. It is normal for your eye to feel itchy, especially on the first day; your vision may be blurry for a few days. Using cool compresses may help relieve this discomfort.

Do not bend your head with the weight of your body for an extended period of time.

Be careful not to get water or soap in your eyes for 2 weeks. Showering, hair washing and hair dyeing are allowed. Attention: no swimming (in a pool or lake) for 2 weeks.

Ask your doctor’s advice if you are planning to fly.

Your doctor will tell you if you can drive at your next appointment.

The nurse will give you the date and place of your next appointment.
Please note that the hospital does not provide any pharmacy services. You must get the prescribed medications at your local pharmacy.
Important information to remember:

Your doctor: ________________________________

Admitting Department:
514-934-1934, ext. 77155

Day Surgery Unit:
514-934-1934, ext. 77693

Ophthalmology Clinic:
514-934-1934, ext. 77294

Lachine Hospital
University Health Center
650 16th Avenue, Lachine, Qc,
H8S 3N5

Notes
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Help Us Help Others

Help support the MUHC Patient Education Office! Donations make a huge difference. They help us create health information materials and programs to deliver the best care for life.

All patient materials are freely available on the internet to MUHC patients, and to patients and families everywhere.

Make a donation to MUHC Patient Education - Dr. David Fleiszer through the Montreal General Hospital Foundation:

Online: https://www.mghfoundation.com

By phone: 514-934-8230

By mail / in person: 1650 Cedars Avenue, E6.129, Montreal, QC, H3G 1A4, Canada

Thank you for your support!