

Three Types of Cataracts

There are three types of cataracts, each described by its location on the lens and what group of people is most commonly at risk.¹

1. Nuclear Cataracts

Nuclear cataracts are the most common type of cataract and are usually associated with aging. A nuclear cataract occurs in the center of the lens.¹ A nuclear cataract can cause nearsightedness (myopia) – a temporary improvement in your reading vision sometimes referred to as *second sight*. Unfortunately, this *second sight* disappears as the cataract worsens.²

2. Cortical Cataracts

Cortical cataracts are often found in people with diabetes and begin as wedge-shaped spokes in the cortex (softer material surrounding the innermost nucleus of the lens) of the lens. This type of cataract progresses, with spokes extending from the outside of the lens to the center.¹ When the spokes reach the center, they interfere with the transmission of light and cause glare and loss of contrast. Though this type of cataract usually develops slowly, it may impair both distance and near vision significantly – potentially requiring surgery at a relatively early stage.²

3. Subcapsular Cataract

Subcapsular cataracts are found in people with diabetes, as well as those with high myopia (nearsightedness), retinitis pigmentosa, or steroid intake. This type of cataract develops slowly and starts as a small opacity under the capsule, usually at the back of the lens.¹ Significant visual symptoms may not appear with this type of cataract until it is well developed. Typical symptoms are glare and blurred vision.²

Sources:

1. American Academy of Ophthalmology (2000). New study indicated nutrition may play greater role in preventing cataracts. Retrieved January 21, 2008. From http://medem.com/search/article_display.cfm?path=\\TANQUERAY\M_ContentItem&mstr=/M_ContentItem/ZZZ4MW8IJ7C.html&soc=AAO&srch_typ=NAV_SERCH.
2. Stines, C. (2007). News from ACS: Open your eyes to the treatment and prevention of cataracts [on-line]. Retrieved January 21, 2008. From http://medem.com/search/article_display.cfm?path=\\TANQUERAY\M_ContentItem&mstr=/M_ContentItem/ZZZS3V52U4D.html&soc=ACS&srch_typ=NAV_SERCH.



Educational programs of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, disability, religion, age, or national origin.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating