YAG Capsulotomy
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Why YAG Capsulotomy?

After cataract surgery, your vision can become cloudy again, like it was when you had a cataract. This is sometimes called “after-cataract.” But it isn’t a new cataract. Instead, the posterior capsule, which holds the lens in place, becomes cloudy. Your eye doctor can most likely restore your vision. A laser treatment called YAG capsulotomy is used.

Your Eye After Cataract Surgery

When your cataract was removed, the lens of your eye was replaced with an intraocular lens, or IOL. This new clear lens was placed in the posterior capsule, which held the old cloudy lens. You could see again because the IOL allowed light to reach your retina (a layer that lines the back of the eye).

If the Capsule Becomes Cloudy

The posterior capsule is a thin, clear film, much like a piece of cellophane. Months or even years after cataract surgery, the posterior capsule can become cloudy. This blocks light from reaching the retina.
How a Laser Works

A laser is a powerful beam of energy that can be focused on a tiny point. Because a laser can be precisely controlled, it is safe and reliable.

The YAG Laser

For a capsulotomy, your eye doctor uses a YAG laser. The YAG laser delivers tiny, rapid bursts of energy. A special contact lens may be used to help focus the laser on the treatment spot. The laser passes through the front of the eye and the IOL without harming them. When the laser reaches the posterior capsule, it makes a tiny opening. Light can then enter the eye again. Enough of the posterior capsule is left to hold the IOL in place.

The laser makes an opening in the cloudy capsule. This allows light to pass through again.
Your Experience

YAG capsulotomy is done in your eye doctor’s office or at an outpatient surgery center. The treatment is quick and painless. And you can most often return to your normal routine right away. There are no needles, no stitches, and no risk of infection. Your vision will most likely be fully restored soon after treatment.

Possible Risks

Laser treatment is safe. But there are some risks:

- Eye pressure may rise, usually only for a short time.
- The laser can nick the IOL. But this almost never affects vision.
- In rare cases, the retina may become detached.

Before Capsulotomy

Ask your eye doctor whether you need to have someone drive you to and from your treatment. Most people see sharply again right away and go home shortly after treatment.

During Capsulotomy

First, your eye is numbed and your pupil is dilated with drops. Then, you rest your chin on a stand in front of the laser machine. You may see flashes of light and hear a faint clicking sound as the laser enters your eye. But you should not feel any pain. You can help by staying relaxed and still.
After Capsulotomy

You should begin to see better within a few hours. Your eye doctor may check your eye pressure later that day or the next. He or she may also give you eyedrops or an ointment. Once the posterior capsule has been opened, it won't cause your vision to cloud again.

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