

# Health Tips

## from New London Hospital

### Facts About Cataracts

Cataracts are one of the leading causes of vision loss in the United States, especially for people over the age of 65. Cataracts are a painless cloudy area in the lens of the eye. This cloudy area blocks the passage of light to the retina, which is located in the back of the eye. The retina is a nerve that sends signals to the brain about what it sees based on light that enters the eye. The less amount of light that enters the eye due to a cataract, the worse your vision can become.



*Dr. Gregory M. Barban*

**Cataracts are caused by:** aging; exposure to sunlight; eye disease; taking certain medications, such as steroids; health problems, such as diabetes; and family history. Some children are born with cataracts.

**The symptoms of potential cataracts include:** cloudy, fuzzy, foggy vision; glare from lamps or sun; difficulty driving at night due to headlight glare; frequent changes in eye glass or contact lens prescriptions; and double vision in one eye.

**It is important to speak with your ophthalmologist** if you experience any of these symptoms, so that he/she can diagnose and determine the severity of a cataract. Diagnosis is performed through physical exams and questions about your current condition. Other tests may be performed to determine the severity.

**There is no medicine or at-home remedy for cataracts.** The only treatment of a cataract is through surgery performed by your ophthalmologist. For less severe cataracts that do not greatly affect vision, surgery is not always needed.

**There are ways to slow down the development and progression of cataracts.** Try to wear hats and ultraviolet filtering sunglasses when out in the sun and avoid sunlamps and tanning booths. Smoking and excessive amounts of alcohol can increase the chance of cataracts. Eating healthy and keeping long-term illnesses, such as diabetes, under control can help decrease your chances of forming cataracts.

*Comprehensive healthcare services, including gynecology, pediatrics, and rehabilitation, are available at the Newport Health Center, a program of New London Hospital. For a convenient appointment, call 603-863-4100.*