

Temiskaming Hospital

August 5, 2009

Cataract Awareness Month

A cataract is a clouding of the eye's natural lens. The lens works much like a camera lens, focusing light onto the retina at the back of the eye. The lens also adjusts the eye's focus, letting us see things clearly both up close and far away.

The lens is mostly made of water and protein. The protein is arranged in a way that keeps the lens clear and lets light pass through it. But as we age, some of the protein may clump together and start to cloud a small area of the lens. This is a cataract, and over time, it may grow larger and cloud more of the lens, making it harder to see.

The following risk factors can increase the chance or progression of cataract:

- Accumulated exposure to ultraviolet radiation
- Trauma
- Some diseases of the eye
- Diseases such as diabetes
- Some medications
- Poor nutrition

You can help to prevent and detect cataract(s) by doing the following:

- Wear proper eye protection to minimize trauma or radiation exposure
- Wear sunglasses to protect against ultra violet rays
- Have regular eye examinations by your optometrist

When symptoms begin to appear, you may be able to improve your vision for a while using new glasses, strong bifocals, magnification, appropriate lighting or other visual aids. Think about surgery when your cataracts have progressed enough to seriously impair your vision and affect your daily life. Many people consider poor vision an inevitable fact of aging, but cataract surgery is a simple procedure to regain vision.

We encourage you to use this information as a tool for discussing cataract with your health practitioner. If you think you have a cataract, see an optometrist for an exam to find out for sure.



Temiskaming Hospital
(705) 647-8121
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Visiting Hours:

- 1000 to 2000 hours for medical patients, surgical patients and Long-Term Care patients;
- 1400 to 1600 hours and 1800 to 2000 hours for obstetrics;
- Visitors to the Special Care Unit (SCU) are restricted to immediate family and/or significant other(s).