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Intraocular Lens Implants "IOL" FAQ'S

What are Intraocular Lens Implants?

An intraocular lens (IOL) implant is the synthetic lens that is used to replace the natural lens when removed during cataract surgery or refractive lens exchange.

Monofocal Lens

The first type of IOL that came available was known as a monofocal or "standard" lens. This type of lens corrects the cataract and can reduce your nearsightedness or farsightedness. If you have astigmatism and you elect for a monofocal lens implant, then you should expect to need glasses to achieve the best clarity for all distances of vision. If you have your astigmatism corrected at the time of surgery (such as with Laser Cataract Surgery) or if you have very little astigmatism and you elect for a monofocal lens implant, then you can expect relatively good distance vision but to rely on reading glasses for most near and some intermediate activities.

Toric Lens

This lens is not multifocal in nature but is designed to correct a wide range of astigmatism. If you have astigmatism, then this lens may help to reduce your need for glasses for distance vision but it will not eliminate the need for some eyeglass use.

Multifocal and Accommodating Lenses

If you would like to have greater independence from eyeglasses or contacts, then a multifocal or accommodating lens implant may be right for you. These lens implants offer a wider range of vision than monofocal lens implants. In FDA studies of these lenses, four out of five patients who chose multifocal or accommodating lenses reported never wearing glasses for distance, intermediate, or near tasks after surgery. Each of these has its own advantages and should be considered along with your unique visual needs, work, and hobbies.

While everyone may be a potential candidate for these advanced technology IOLs, certain criteria allow for the best possible outcomes with any of these lenses:

Good Candidates	Poor Candidates
Minimal Astigmatism	Large Amounts of Astigmatism
Relatively Healthy Eyes Other Than Cataracts	Advanced Glaucoma
A Desire to Decrease Dependence on Glasses	Macular Degeneration
	Other Significant Eye Disease
	Frequent Night Driving Demands

These lens implants are designed to provide a dual focus with part of the lens set for distance and part set for near. The design is different from bifocal eyeglasses where the distance of focus depends on your direction of gaze (looking through the top portion for distance focus and the bottom portion for near focus). With a multifocal lens, the brain learns to automatically find the correct focus.

Not everyone with a multifocal lens implant can read equally well without glasses. Many different factors can cause this individual variability. The ability to read without glasses tends to be better if both eyes have a multifocal lens. The younger and healthier that the eye is, the better the reading ability will be. The ability to read without glasses seems to improve over time for most patients. This is believed to be due to the brains tendency to learn to perform better with practice with the multifocal lens system. While there is no guarantee that you will read as well without glasses as you desire, multifocal lenses give you much better odds of doing so, compared to monofocal lens implants.

West Michigan Eye & Laser's Guide to Intraocular Lenses (IOLs) *Based on a guide published by Alcon*	Near	Intermediate	Distance	Astigmatism
Presbyopia-Correcting Multifocal Lens Most IOLs can only correct vision at one distance—these advanced technology lenses correct vision near, far and in-between, for your best chance at freedom from glasses!				○
Astigmatism-Correcting Monofocal Lens These advanced technology lenses are designed to correct both cataracts and astigmatism at the time of surgery, for clear distance vision without the need for glasses. However, you will still need glasses for reading.	○	○		
Monofocal Lens Typically covered by insurance or Medicare, these trusted lenses provide enhanced distance vision. However, you will likely still need glasses for reading—and possibly for distance vision, particularly eyes with astigmatism.	○	○		○