


8 Blindness from cataract can be cured



Cataract happens mostly to older people. A person who is blind from cataract can be helped to see with an operation.



Some nurses came to our place to talk about cataract. They told us that some of our grandparents would be able to see again if they had an eye operation. Our parents were not sure about this. People were asking a lot of questions: is it true? how much

does it cost? Eventually my grandmother agreed because she had never seen any of us grandchildren. Aka Dlamini's grandfather agreed because he wanted to be able to read the newspaper. Grace Ndo's grandmother agreed because she used to make pots and wanted to work again. They all went together to have the operation. All of them were very excited because their dreams came true and they can see again.



Class Activity

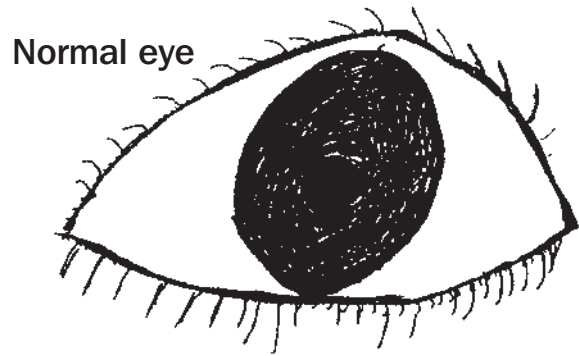
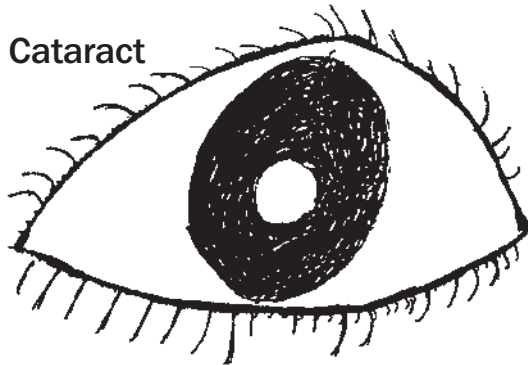
What is it like to have a cataract?

Cover your face with a sheet of tracing paper or thin white paper and look at the light. What can you see? This is what the world looks like for a person who has cataract.

This is because the black part (pupil) becomes cloudy and does not allow enough light to come into the eye. An operation can help to clean the cloudiness so that the person can see clearly again. It is like removing the paper from in front of your eyes. The cloudy lens is removed from the eye. In some operations, a new lens is put in the eye. If a lens is not put into the eye, the person is given spectacles to wear.

The difference between cataract and glaucoma

	Cataract	Glaucoma
Pupil	White	Black
Results after treatment	The vision is improved	The vision will be the same



Cataract can also happen to younger people. A baby can be born with cataract.

One day, when Abu was four years old, he was playing in the courtyard. It was a sunny day. His mother noticed that he was bumping into things. When she threw a ball to him, he could not catch it. Abu was unhappy. His mother embraced him closer to wipe the tears off her son's face. While Abu was gazing at his mother's eyes,



his mother noticed a small whitish thing in both the eyes of Abu. Abu's mother thought it was due to crying and flushed water to remove them. The white things did not go away.

Without waiting for her husband to return from the market, she took her son to the Thana Health Complex. The doctor explained that Abu was suffering from cataract and that an operation would cure him. But they must take him to the hospital without delay. When she told her husband, he could not believe it, "I thought that only old people suffer from cataract!". They were very afraid, but they agreed with the doctor that Abu would have the operation. It was this operation that gave Abu his sight. He can now catch a ball and is attending school with his friends.



Health Messages

Tell your friends and family that cataract is a problem that can be treated.

If anyone at home has got a cataract, they should go to the clinic or health centre.