

What to Expect During Cataract Surgery

What You Feel During Cataract Surgery

No Pain

- Your eye will be numbed with drops or sometimes an injection. Please let the surgeon know if you feel pain at any point during the procedure.

Sensation of Pressure

- You will feel the surgeon touching your eye area as they put the drape on at the beginning. This will partially cover your face but will not affect your ability to breathe.
- You may sense instruments moving but this will not be uncomfortable.
- You will feel pressure that varies during the procedure. The Surgeon will keep you fully informed as to when to expect this.

Water Sensation

- Your eye will have water rinsed over it during the procedure, this water can feel rather cold.

Light and Visual Sensations

- You will likely see bright lights, shadows, or colourful shapes.
- Some patients describe it as a “light show” or “kaleidoscope” effect.
- You will not see the surgeon or tools in detail, because the eye is focused on a microscope light.

Emotional Experience

- Anxiety is common before the procedure, but patients are surprised at how quick and painless it is.
- The whole process typically takes less than 20 minutes.

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What You Hear During Cataract Surgery

The Surgeon and Staff Talking

- You will hear the surgical team giving instructions or calmly talking.
- The surgeon will talk to you during the procedure to inform you of progress.

Ultrasound Machine Sounds

- You will hear a buzzing, humming, or high-pitched whirring sound as the surgeon uses the machine to operate on the cataract. This machine can also beep and whilst you will be aware of the noise, it is not too loud.

Fluid Sounds

- You may be aware of the sound of fluid being added to or removed from your eye. This may sound like a quiet splashing or gurgling.