

## The Quick Summary

You have nothing to worry about. You have a cataract, but it is mild and doesn't need surgery yet. It might be years before you do.

### Cataract

You have a cataract, but Dr. Shalwala thinks that it is mild. A cataract is a cloudy lens inside the eyeball, and the lens of the eyeball is a part of everyone's eye. Even though the lens is inside the eyeball, it grows throughout life. Since the lens is inside the eye, it doesn't have much room to expand into, so while it does get a little bigger throughout life, the main change that occurs is that the lens becomes denser and denser.

The lens getting denser is a very slow process that occurs over decades. The first change that occurs as the lens gets denser is that it stops being as flexible as it is in youth, which starts to be noticeable around age 40. Once the lens becomes less flexible, it cannot focus at different distances. Someone who is used to being able to see far away and then quickly glancing down at a piece of paper to read it will no longer be able to do so. This is often corrected with reading glasses or bifocals. The loss of lens flexibility is a gradual process also, with basically complete inflexibility developing around age 65-70.



As complete inflexibility starts to set in, the lens becomes so dense that it becomes cloudy and eventually hard to see through. Since your cataract is mild, the lens is a little cloudy but not hard to see through yet. However, given enough time, the lens will become cloudier and cloudier until it is hard to see through. At that time, we will call the lens a visually significant cataract.

There is no "amount of density" or "amount of clouding" that tips you from a mild cataract to a visually significant cataract. Once it looks somewhat dense and you start noticing symptoms like blurry vision, halos around lights (especially headlights), and glare, we call it visually significant. Someone who has a visually significant cataract can have cataract surgery, but they usually don't have to unless they want to. Dr. Shalwala prefers to do surgery on people who feel that their vision is really bothering them so that they might say, "I have to have something done."

We will continue to follow your cataract to make sure that we can operate when you and Dr. Shalwala agree that it is the right time.

**Visit the website below for more information or contact us today!**

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