

# Posterior Capsulotomy

## What is a posterior capsulotomy?

Posterior capsulotomy is a surgical procedure which is often necessary after cataract surgery.

Cataract surgery is performed when the lens of the eye, which focuses light rays, becomes cloudy. When it interferes with vision, it is called a cataract and the treatment is to remove the cloudy lens surgically.

## What does the capsule have to do with cataract surgery?

The lens has a cellophane-like outer lining called the capsule. The most common method of cataract surgery leaves the back or posterior part of the capsule intact after the rest of the lens is removed.

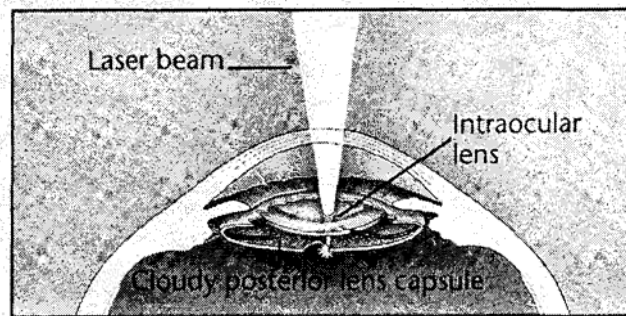
This technique maintains the normal barrier between the inside compartments of the eye. The back part of the capsule may be used to support the intraocular lens implant, usually inserted at the time of cataract surgery.

## Why is a posterior capsulotomy necessary?

The posterior capsule is normally clear. However with the passage of time after cataract surgery, this capsule can

itself become cloudy or wrinkled. If clouding or wrinkling of the posterior capsule interferes with your vision, your ophthalmologist may surgically make an opening in the capsule to again restore normal sight.

This can be done with laser surgery. It is not necessary to remove the capsule, but only to make an opening in the center to allow the clear passage of light rays. Although the laser procedure requires close and precise focusing by the ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) for the patient the technique is usually painless and generally works quickly.



*A laser beam painlessly opens the hazy capsule behind the pupil and intraocular lens*

While posterior capsulotomy is usually effective, as with any surgical procedure, rare complications such as detachment of the retina or elevated pressure in the eye can occur. These complications are rare, but they can cause loss of vision.

## When should a capsulotomy be performed?

If your best vision diminishes after cataract surgery it is important to consult your ophthalmologist.

A capsulotomy may be recommended when your vision bothers you enough and your ophthalmologist feels the capsule is at fault.

Many people may eventually need a capsulotomy after cataract surgery, especially younger people. The need for a capsulotomy should not cause you worry, since the clouding or wrinkling of the posterior capsule is part of the body's normal healing process in some patients.

### **Why are regular medical eye examinations important for everyone?**

Eye disease can occur at any age. Many eye diseases do not cause symptoms until the disease has done damage. Since most blindness is preventable if diagnosed and treated early, regular medical examinations by an ophthalmologist are very important.

Compliments of Your Ophthalmologist

**Daniel B Pope, M.D. PA**  
426 Manatee Ave W  
Bradenton, FL 34205



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF OPHTHALMOLOGY  
THE EYE M.D. Association  
P.O. Box 7424, San Francisco, CA 94120-7424  
<http://www.eyenet.org>

Copyright® 1997 American Academy of Ophthalmology®