

Refractive Lens Exchange

Your guide to refractive lens exchange procedure, techniques and recovery.



What is refractive lens exchange?

Refractive lens exchange (RLE), also called clear lens extraction, is an alternative for laser eye surgery or implantable contact lenses for people experiencing far-sightedness. It can be a preferable option for some people, particularly those over 40 years old.

It is a more permanent form of vision correction and is the same procedure as cataract surgery. It also means you won't require cataract surgery in the future because the lens will not degrade.

- Reduces the need for glasses
- Permanently improves vision with a synthetic lens
- Safe and common procedure



What happens during a refractive lens exchange procedure?

You will be sedated during the procedure. Your lens will be removed and replaced with a clear, artificial lens known as an intraocular implant. This lens is tailored to your eye's shape to make sure it will have the correct focus.

You can have one eye done or both at the same time. If both are done on the same day, your eyes should adapt quicker, making your vision better.

The surgery can be performed at a day clinic and takes between three to four hours from your arrival to when you can go home. The surgery is not covered by Medicare.



What is the expected recovery from refractive lens exchange?

After surgery you may experience mild discomfort. Your eyes may feel dry and slightly gritty. Your vision will be blurred for the first day or two due to dilated pupils.

You will not need a patch or stitches but you'll need to use protective eye drops for four weeks.

We will review your condition on the day of your surgery, one week later and four weeks later. As your eyes adapt you may experience halos around lights. This is normal.

Your vision should be optimal at three months.

Expected recovery times (guide only):

- Read - 24 to 48 hours
- Work - 24 to 48 hours
- Drive - 24 hours
- Fly - 24 hours
- Wear eye makeup - one week
- Run - two weeks
- Swim - two weeks
- Lift weights - four weeks
- Play golf - four weeks



Dr Andrew Apel

MBBS (Qld) FRANZCO

Dr Andrew Apel is an ophthalmologist with additional sub-specialty training in corneal and anterior segment surgery. He is an accomplished, highly-esteemed refractive surgeon with more than 25 years' experience. He is a Fellow of the Royal Australian College of Ophthalmologists.

Dr Apel is highly sought-after and greatly respected by patients and peers.



Dr John Hogden

MBBS (UNSW) BMedSc FRANZCO

Dr John Hogden is an ophthalmologist with sub-specialty training in external eye disease as well as corneal, cataract, anterior segment and refractive surgery. He completed an additional sub-specialty fellowship training program at the University of British Columbia Vancouver Eye Care Centre in Canada.

Dr John Hogden is well known for his personalised, attentive care.

Do you have a question or concern about your eye health?

To discuss your condition with an experienced ophthalmologist or optometrist, please contact The Eye Health Centre.



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