

Featured Ask an Eye M.D. question

Question:

My child has Down syndrome and autism. I was surprised to find out he has cataracts in both eyes; one may not be operable. They are suggesting possible ocular implant, what is the success rate and percentage of possibly getting an infection? Would he lose his eye if he did get an infection?

Answer:

Lens implants (known as intraocular lenses or IOLs) have been routinely used to replace the natural lens after cataract surgery in adults for decades. Increasingly, IOLs have been used in children to aid in visual recovery after cataract surgery. In fact, most children older than 2 years of age receive an IOL during cataract surgery today. Both cataract surgery and IOL placement in children are highly successful, though vision is often limited in young children by amblyopia (commonly referred to as lazy eye) that can develop as a result of the cataract. Infection can occur after any surgery, including cataract surgery. Fortunately, this complication occurs at a rate of less than one in 3,000 such surgeries, and vision can be saved in most cases if the infection is detected early.

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