

## Keeping Your Eye on Cataracts



**Did you know that cataracts are also the leading cause of vision loss in the United States, and the leading cause of preventable blindness in the world? 24 million Americans over the age of 40 are affected by cataracts. The good news is this common eye condition is also highly treatable.**

### What is a cataract?

"We have a lens behind the colored part of our eye, also known as the iris. This lens acts as a window to let light in and project crisp visual images on the retina. When that lens becomes cloudy, we call it a cataract," explains Dr. Adam Miller, an ophthalmologist with Cortland Regional Medical Center.

There are three main types of cataracts: Nuclear cataracts are the most common age-related cataract and are caused by the hardening and yellowing of the lens over time. Cortical cataracts begin as streaks or opaque wedges on the outside edge of the lens that gradually meet in the middle, "like spokes on a wheel," says Dr. Miller. Posterior subcapsular cataracts occur on the back surface of the lens. "If you are diabetic or have taken high doses of steroid medications in the past, you have a higher risk of developing this type," Dr. Miller says. Family history, obesity, smoking, previous eye injury, and high blood pressure can also contribute to your overall risk.

### Diagnosis and treatment

Since most cataracts start out small and grow slowly, getting an annual eye exam is the best early detection system. Dr. Miller also recommends visiting your doctor at the first sign of any noticeable changes in your vision.

"Some of the first symptoms you may experience include blurred or hazy vision, increased glare or halos on headlights when driving at night, and difficulty reading or seeing fine detail. As the clouding progresses, you'll notice more visual disturbance," Dr. Miller says.

Stronger glasses, bifocals, and brighter lighting can help for a while, but "once the cataract begins interfering with your daily activities or you find that you've stopped doing some of your favorite things like reading, sewing,

or using a computer, it's time to consider surgery," says Dr. Miller.

Cataract surgery is safe and effective treatment for most patients. The procedure involves removing the cloudy lens, and replacing it with a clear, plastic intraocular implant. Vision improves almost immediately following surgery, and after healing, patients are often less dependent on glasses.

"This is one of the most satisfying outcomes for me, because patients often don't realize how much their vision was impacted until it is corrected. One of the best things I hear after surgery is when grandparents tell me they can read to their grandkids again, and people who could no longer drive safely are able to regain their independence," says Dr. Miller proudly.

### Eight Tips for Healthy Eyes

You can't do anything about your age or your family history, but here are some ways you can help keep your eyes healthy and lower the chances of developing cataracts in the future.

1. Make an annual eye exam a priority.
2. Eat a healthy diet rich in antioxidants, and vitamins C and E.
3. Quit smoking.
4. Reduce your alcohol consumption.
5. Wear eye protection when doing yard work or playing sports.
6. Wear sunglasses to limit your exposure to UV light.
7. Keep your diabetes under control.
8. Avoid using corticosteroid medications.

In honor of Men's Health Month and Cataract Awareness Month, Dr. Miller will be offering free cataract screenings throughout June. Call (607) 753-1017 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. to schedule your FREE screening today!

### UPCOMING EVENTS

#### SATURDAY, JUNE 2

**S.T.E.M. Saturday**  
10:00 – 11:00 a.m.  
Community Room, YMCA Cortland  
STEM-Saturdays are a monthly opportunity for children to explore science, technology, engineering, and math.  
Ages 5-12. Fee is \$5 per child.  
For more information or to register, call (607) 756-2893.

#### FRIDAY, JUNE 8

**Free Immunization Clinic**  
Call 753-5028 to schedule an appointment.  
Sponsored by Cortland County Health Department

#### SATURDAY, JUNE 16

**BorgWarner Cortland YMCA Race Series**  
**YMCA Father's Day 2.5 & 5K**  
Race starts at 9:00 a.m.  
Lime Hollow Educational Center  
3277 Gracie Road, Cortland  
Register online at:  
[www.cortlandymca.org](http://www.cortlandymca.org)  
Sponsored by CRMC

#### SATURDAY, JUNE 16

**American Cancer Society Relay for Life**  
11 a.m. – Midnight  
Homer Village Green  
Opening Ceremonies begin at 12 p.m.  
Luminaria begins at 8:30 p.m.

### ONGOING EVENTS

#### Free Cataract Screenings

**June is Cataract Awareness Month.** Dr. Adam Miller, Cortland Regional's board-certified ophthalmologist will be offering cataract screenings during regular business hours. Call Cortland Regional Ophthalmology at 607-753-1017 to schedule your appointment today!

#### 607 Healing Hearts Support Group

6:00 – 8:00 p.m.  
28 North Main Street, Cortland  
An overdose grief support group for parents and guardians who have lost a child.  
For more information contact [607healinghearts@gmail.com](mailto:607healinghearts@gmail.com).

#### CRMC Diabetic

**Self-Management Classes**  
For people with diabetes or pre-diabetes. 4 classes per series.  
To register call (607) 756-3517.



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When you or a loved one needs specialty eye care, choose Dr. Adam Miller. A board-certified ophthalmologist offering preventative care and surgical treatment for acute injuries and diseases of the eye, including

- Cataracts
- Dry eye
- Macular degeneration
- Conjunctivitis
- Diabetic retinopathy
- Optic neuropathy

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Your #1 connection to great health

