

TO DILATE OR NOT TO DILATE?

A guide to dilation for cataract postoperative assessments.

As the UK's largest cataract surgery provider, with some of the best outcomes and lowest complication rates, we're often asked whether patients should be dilated during their cataract postoperative (post-op) assessment.

This is a guide for community optometrists on our SpaMedica post-op processes and recommendations regarding dilation.

Our guidance is to use your clinical judgement as to when you should dilate.

If you're an experienced optometrist, then you will have gained many years of experience of patient care and best practice and will be confident in your judgement. If you're at all unsure then we would recommend that you do dilate.

We DO recommend that all community optometrists do dilate any patients that have:

- **high myopia (-6.00D or worse)* and/or**
- **experienced previous retinal detachment**

* recommended - please use your clinical judgement

Only a very small percentage of patients who have **no complications** during surgery will experience postoperative issues or concerns. So, it's very unlikely you will see a patient with a postoperative complication. By following the guidance outlined in our postoperative accreditation training you can also be confident that you know what to look out for during your examination.

For further guidance please refer to your local CCG and LOC patient pathways – which may include recommendations on dilation.

SpaMedica offers a 24/7 clinical helpline for both patients and community optometrists, providing post-op advice if the patient is experiencing any problems. Our 24/7 helpline is manned by SpaMedica optometrists, with back-up support from our consultant ophthalmologists and medical director, if required.

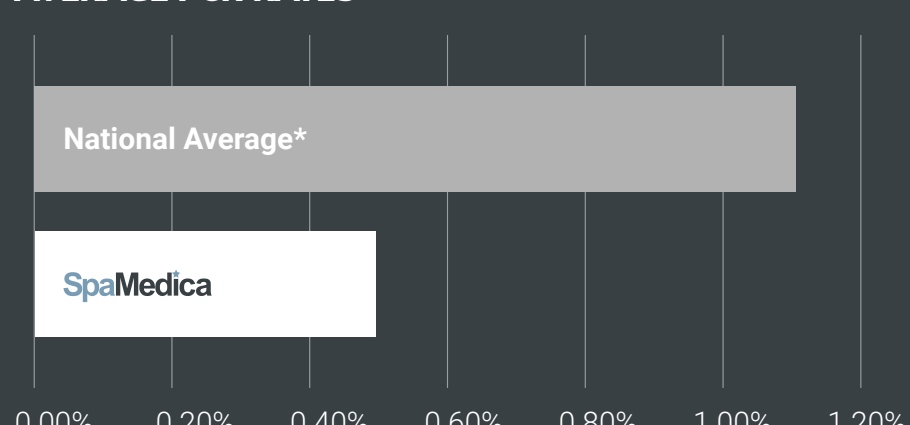
We also have an emergency post-op appointment process for any patients experiencing discomfort following surgery or have symptoms associated with postoperative complications. These patients will be booked for an assessment at their local SpaMedica hospital to check and treat any issues within 24 hours of contacting us.

As a guide, 72% of SpaMedica patients are seen following cataract surgery by community optometrists for their post-op assessment. The other 28% attend SpaMedica clinics for their post-op assessment due to one of the following:

- **27.5%** - community optometrist who referred them is not a member of our SpaMedica Postoperative Accreditation Scheme.
- **0.5%** - patient experienced a complication during surgery

For reassurance, we can confirm that SpaMedica will see all patients postoperatively that experience a Posterior Capsular Rupture (PCR), or other complication during surgery. These patients are seen for a post-op assessment by SpaMedica at six weeks following surgery and are then asked to visit their community optometrist for an up-to-date refraction. So, any postoperative problems will be picked up and treated by the SpaMedica team before visiting their community optometrist.

AVERAGE PCR RATES



This indicates that SpaMedica patients are 2.3 times less likely (based on the national average of 1.1%) to experience a PCR complication during cataract surgery.

For reference here is the information on post-op assessments, provided in the 'NICE guideline for the management of cataracts in adults', and endorsed by the Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth). NB - SpaMedica notes shown in italics:

1.9 Postoperative assessment

1.9.1 Commissioners and service providers should ensure that the following are in place:

- Processes that identify complications after surgery and ensure that there is prompt access to specialist ophthalmology services. (*SpaMedica Accreditation training covers how to identify complications and we have 24/7 helpline and 24/7 emergency appointments available for SpaMedica patients*)
- Processes to ensure that the UK Minimum Cataract Dataset for National Audit is completed. (*SpaMedica is the only independent eye hospital group to provide cataract surgery data to the RCOphth Cataract Dataset for National Audit*)
- Arrangements so that healthcare professionals discuss second-eye cataract surgery with people who have a cataract in their non-operated eye. (*Both SpaMedica and community optometrists provide information and discussion to patients*)

1.9.2 Consider collecting patient visual function and quality-of-life data for entry into an electronic dataset. (*SpaMedica collates visual function data via our MediSight portal (for accredited community optometrists)*)

1.9.3 Do not offer in person, first-day review to people after uncomplicated cataract surgery. (*Not offered for uncomplicated cataract surgery patients*)