

# CATARACT PATIENT CO-MANAGEMENT TREATMENT PLAN

## Patient Handout

This information is designed for patients who have been diagnosed as having cataracts and who intend to have cataract surgery. Any surgical procedure contains some element of risk in the post-operative period. For your health and safety, it is imperative that you receive proper follow-up care after your cataract surgery. This fact sheet will explain what follow-up care is, and who is qualified to perform it for you.

### **What is Follow-Up Care?**

After your cataract surgery, you will have several appointments with an eye care professional. You should understand that complications may not necessarily occur during surgery, but may occur after the surgery has been performed. For this reason, it is imperative that you have appropriate care by a qualified eye care professional following your surgery. He or she will perform tests to measure your visual acuity and, ultimately, if necessary, fit you for eyeglasses. In addition, your doctor will ensure that any post-surgery complications are detected and treated. This series of visits is called your “follow-up care.”

### **Who Is Qualified to Provide Follow-Up Care?**

It is critical that your follow-up care be performed by a qualified eye care professional familiar with your case. Several different practitioners are qualified to provide this service. You should understand the roles that each may play in your recovery.

Your Surgeon: Your surgeon is a licensed ophthalmologist, a medical doctor who specializes in diseases of the eye and who will implant your lens. Your surgeon will always see you one day after surgery to insure that your recovery is progressing normally. Your surgeon will also determine when you can be released from his or her care to return to your optometrist for further follow-up visits as well as post-operative glasses, if needed.

Your Optometrist: While you may request to receive your follow-up care from your surgeon, Doctors of Optometry are eye care professionals trained, licensed, and fully qualified to provide follow-up care once you are “released” by your surgeon. Most patients find it very convenient to return to their optometrist for post-operative care and services. Your optometrist is also the vision specialist who will examine and fit you for your glasses, if necessary, after recovery. Your optometrist will be in communication with your surgeon following each post-operative visit. If problems develop during the post-surgery follow-up period, your optometrist and your surgeon will communicate regarding your care until these have resolved.

Another Ophthalmologist: If you travel away from home to have surgery and wish to return home soon after surgery, or if you have any other personal reason for not receiving your follow-up care from your surgeon or optometrist, you may decide to see another ophthalmologist for your follow-up care. An ophthalmologist other than your surgeon can perform all of your follow-up care after your initial visit with your surgeon one day after surgery. You must, however, make arrangements with the ophthalmologist and notify your surgeon before having surgery. Your surgeon will only discharge you from his or her care if he or she has confidence in the professional who will supervise your recovery.

