

*Columbus Ophthalmology Associates*  
**POSTERIOR CAPSULOTOMY**

**What is the posterior capsule?**

With modern cataract surgery the inner portion of the lens is removed by a technique known as phacoemulsification. A thin barrier called the posterior capsule is left in place to support the intraocular lens that is then placed in the eye. The capsule is thin and clear, similar to the plastic wrap used in the kitchen. As time passes, this posterior capsule can become clouded or wrinkled. It then acts similar to cellophane that has become wrinkled and becomes difficult to see through, similar to the original cataract.

**What is a posterior capsulotomy?**

When the clouding of the posterior capsule interferes with your vision, a laser procedure can be done to make a small opening in this membrane to improve vision. This procedure is called posterior capsulotomy and is performed by the YAG laser. Up to 30% of patients that have had cataract surgery may need a posterior capsulotomy.

**What can be expected following a posterior capsulotomy?**

When the posterior capsular membrane is lasered, images will once again be focused clearly. While this technique is usually effective, rare complications can occur such as a retinal detachment, hemorrhage or loss of vision. The clouding of the posterior capsule can occur as quickly as a few months after cataract surgery or not develop for many years. It is quite common in younger patients and repeating a YAG laser capsulotomy is rarely needed.

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