

Retained Lens Material

The lens is a structure in the front of the eye that focuses light on the retina. As a natural part of the aging process, the lens slowly becomes cloudy. A cloudy lens is known as a **cataract**. As a cataract worsens over time, it can lead to blurred vision.

Cataract surgery is a common procedure performed by ophthalmologists (eye surgeons). During the procedure, the cloudy lens is removed and replaced with a clear artificial lens. A cataract normally sits in a clear coating or envelope known as the **capsular bag**. The capsular bag holds the lens in place while the surgeon removes the cataract with ultrasound vibration and suction.

Sometimes, the capsular bag is too weak to support the cataract as it is being surgically removed. If the capsular bag breaks, pieces of lens material can fall into the middle of the eye into the vitreous gel, where it can no longer be reached during a routine cataract operation. At this point, the cataract surgeon may refer the patient to a retinal specialist to remove the remaining lens material from the back portion of the eye. This is accomplished with a procedure called a **vitrectomy**.

Prognosis: Vitrectomy surgery to remove lens material in the vitreous gel is performed in a hospital or ambulatory surgery center. The operation is usually done under local anesthesia, and patients typically go home on the same day of surgery. In general, the surgery has a high success rate, and the visual prognosis is good.

Houston Retina Associates, P.A.

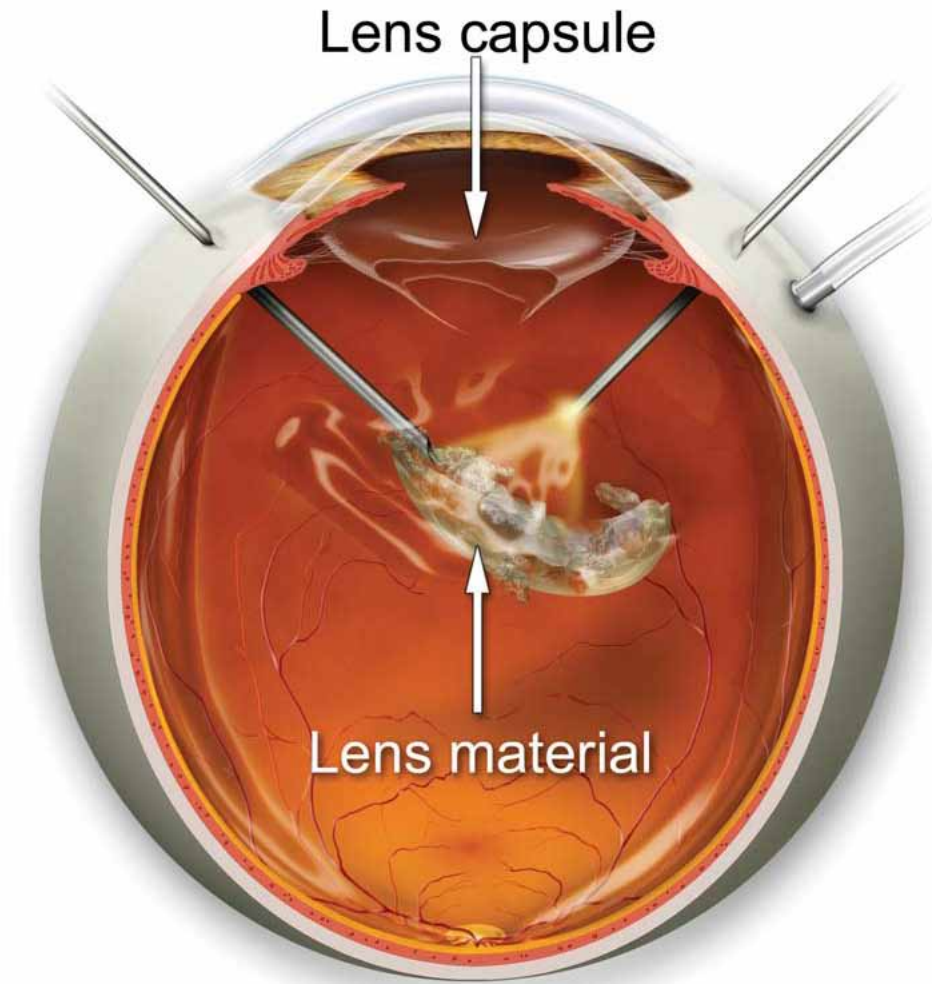
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