

Category change for cataract extraction second eye

Summary This Information Bulletin informs NSW Health on the change made to the categorisation of second eye cataract extraction. Effective from 1 July 2024, the Clinical Urgency Category (CUC) recommendation for second eye cataract extraction will be a Category 2 (surgery within 90 days).

Document type Information Bulletin

Document number IB2024_027

Publication date 28 May 2024

Author branch System Purchasing

Branch contact 02 9461 9361

Review date 28 May 2026

Policy manual Not applicable

File number HA-2024-0002068_35627

Status Active

Functional group Clinical/Patient Services - Anaesthetics, Surgical

Applies to Ministry of Health, Local Health Districts, Board Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Chief Executive Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Specialty Network Governed Statutory Health Corporations, Affiliated Health Organisations, NSW Health Pathology, Public Health System Support Division, Public Hospitals

Distributed to Ministry of Health, Public Health System, Divisions of General Practice, Private Hospitals and Day Procedure Centres

Audience Administration;Clinical;Executive;Operating

Category change for cataract extraction second eye

Purpose

This Information Bulletin provides information on the change made to the categorisation of second eye cataract extraction. Effective from 1 July 2024, the Clinical Urgency Category (CUC) recommendation for second eye cataract extraction will be a Category 2 (surgery within 90 days).

Key Information

Effective from 1 July 2024, the CUC recommendation for second eye cataract extraction surgery will change from a Category 3 (surgery within 365 days) to a **Category 2 (surgery within 90 days)**.

Research has found that patients who wait more than 6 months for a second eye cataract surgery may experience negative outcomes during the waiting period, including vision loss, reduced quality of life and increased rate of falls¹. Second eye cataract surgery has been found to improve visual capacity, general health status, and patient satisfaction. It has also improved vision beyond that achieved by first eye surgery and has been found to be cost effective².

The change in NSW Health policy is due to clinical evidence. This means that regardless of whether the patient had their first eye cataract extraction completed in the public or private sector, the recommended CUC for a second eye cataract extraction is a Category 2 (surgery within 90 days).

Cataract extraction- 1st eye and Cataract extraction- 2nd eye have separate Indicator Procedure Codes (IPC). Sites should continue to use the separate IPC numbers when booking a patient for the indicated procedure.

- Indicator Procedure Code (IPC) 292 Cataract extraction first eye
- Indicator Procedure Code (IPC) 293 Cataract extraction second eye.

¹ Keay, L., Ho, K., McCluskey, P. White., A et al (2022). *The incidence of falls after first and second eye cataract surgery: a longitudinal cohort study*. Medical Journal of Australia, 217(2): 94-99. Available at:

<https://www.mja.com.au/journal/2022/217/2/incidence-falls-after-first-and-second-eye-cataract-surgery-longitudinal-cohort>

² Harwood, R.H., & Foss, A.J. (2014). Second-eye cataract surgery: valuable investment or unaffordable luxury? Age and Ageing, 43 (3): 310-2. Available at: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Second-eye-cataract-surgery%3A-valuable-investment-or-Harwood-Foss/45156be2c1e914ac84a76e544c48056b9ee1ac19>

The CUC recommendation for IPC 292 Cataract extraction first eye remains a Category 3 (surgery within 365 days).

If it is unclear on the received Recommendation for Admission (RFA) if this is the first or second cataract extraction, the treating doctor should be contacted for confirmation.

The use of a CUC recommendation remains a recommendation. In line with the NSW Health Policy Directive *Elective Surgery Access* ([PD2022_001](#)), if a non-recommended category is chosen, the treating surgeon is required to provide additional clinical evidence to support the use of a non-recommended category. For further information please refer to NSW Health Policy Directive *Elective Surgery Access* ([PD2022_001](#)), Section 3.2.2 *Reclassification of clinical urgency category*.