**Primary Care Management Guidelines**

**Cataract**

These guidelines are to assist GPs to monitor and manage their patients in a primary care setting until clinical thresholds indicate that tertiary care is required. The clinical thresholds are defined in the guidelines, and may require diagnostic support from a local optometrist or ophthalmologist. Providing a detailed diagnostic report will assist with the triage of your referral into the most appropriate clinic, within clinically appropriate timeframes.

### **Assessment**

* Has an eye examination been performed by an Optometrist or Ophthalmologist to confirm the presence of a cataract?

Not all cataracts are visually significant and glasses can be prescribed to improve vision until surgery is required.

* Is  the  presence  of  cataracts  significantly impacting  on  the  patient’s  quality  of  life  and  their ability to carry out activities of daily living?
* Have you confirmed the patient wants cataract surgery?

A significant number of patients are referred with cataracts and they actually do not want surgery when offered.

* If the patient has co-morbidities, are they fit for surgery?

If the patient has significant other illnesses, these need to be stable and well controlled before referral.

### **Primary Care Management**

* Request an eye examination by an optometrist or ophthalmologist to confirm the presence of cataracts and to optimise vision with glasses where possible

### **When to refer to the Eye and Ear**

* Best corrected vision is equal to or worse than 6/12 in affected eye
* Worse than 6/9 vision and a professional driver
* Only functional eye
* Patient is having difficulty in activities of daily living
* Risk of falls
* Patient wants cataract surgery

### **Information to include on the referral letter**

* Optometrist/ophthalmologist report including visual acuity (VA) and refraction
* Symptoms
* Duration of problem
* Level of visual impairment (recreational, educational, occupational, driving)
* Social circumstances
* Whether first or second eye

### **More information**

Return to our [Primary Care Management Guidelines](http://www.eyeandear.org.au/page/Health_Professionals/Referring_to_the_Eye_and_Ear/Pre-referral_guidelines)

Go to our [Referral Guidelines](http://www.eyeandear.org.au/page/Health_Professionals/Referring_to_the_Eye_and_Ear/Referrals)

[Factsheets](http://www.optometry.org.au/media/452259/nl_optometry_scope_of_practice_gp_2_page.pdf) for GPs on what services optometrists can provide, optometrists scope of practice and [how to find a local optometrist](http://www.optometry.org.au/vic/find-an-optometrist/).

Information on the [Australian College of Optometry](http://aco.org.au/) and services they provide.