

## Chapter 1

# How to Get Started in Premium Cataract Surgery

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### WHAT IS PREMIUM OR REFRACTIVE CATARACT SURGERY?

First, let's define *premium* or *refractive* cataract surgery as happening any time the surgeon takes extra steps in a cataract procedure beyond the *covered services* defined by Medicare, with the aim of achieving a specific refractive result, usually to achieve some degree of spectacle independence. Some of these extra steps are diagnostic, such as corneal topography to define corneal astigmatism beyond the more limited information given by keratometry alone. Some are therapeutic, such as performing limbal relaxing incisions (LRI) intraoperatively. Either way, these extra steps require more work (by the surgeon and his or her staff) than routine cataract surgery; and, more importantly, they require us to deliver to the patient on a promise of better vision.

### HOW TO GET STARTED WITH PREMIUM CATARACT SURGERY

#### *Walking the Walk*

##### **Surgical Confidence**

The first step in offering refractive cataract surgery is a consistent ability to perform uncomplicated surgery to achieve predictable results (ie, “walking the walk”). This means fairly atraumatic surgery through a small incision, a round capsulotomy of desired size (just under 6 mm for most lenses) and leaving behind a clean, intact capsule. For surgeons who are not completely comfortable delivering uncomplicated small-incision phacoemulsification, the prospect of offering refractive cataract surgery is likely to become an exercise in frustration for patient and physician alike.

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