

Blindness After Surgery

A Guide for Patients



A research study sponsored by the ASA Closed Claims Project
www.asaclosedclaims.org

Can surgery affect my sight?

Yes. It's rare, but it *does* happen.

Any major surgery puts stresses on your body, and changes the way your body functions normally. If these changes affect the blood supply to your eyes, vision loss can result.

When does it happen?

If you are going to suffer vision loss, it will usually be noticed within the first few days after surgery.

It's important to have a positive outlook after surgery. Your body will be under a lot less stress the more relaxed you are.

Some blindness is temporary and may go away.

How bad can it get?

It varies. Some people's vision can come back almost as good as new in a few months, after the nerves have healed. If the nerve to the eye is damaged too much, your eyesight could be permanently damaged.

Some people only have trouble with one eye. For others, both eyes are affected. Blindness may be not be total.

What can I do?

If you notice any blurring of vision after surgery, ***immediately*** call your doctor or nurse and tell them about it. They will take steps to identify and start any treatment they think may be helpful.

Hospitals offer rehabilitation. Take advantage of these services. There are also services outside the hospital that you can use.

National Federation of the Blind
410-659-9314, www.nfb.org

American Foundation for the Blind
800-232-5463, www.afb.org

American Council of the Blind
800-424-8666, www.acb.org

Tell us about your problem

Ask your doctor to report your blindness to the *American Society of Anesthesiologists' Postoperative Visual Loss Study*.

**For details, call 206-616-2630
or visit www.asaclosedclaims.org**