

Face-Down Recovery After Retinal Surgery

The retina is a layer of light-sensing cells lining the back of your eye. As light enters your eye, the retina converts the rays into signals that are sent through the optic nerve to your brain, where they are recognized as images.

To repair a damaged or detached retina, your ophthalmologist may remove some of your eye's **vitreous** (the gel-like substance that fills the inside of your eye) and inject a gas bubble into the eye to take its place. This bubble holds the retina in place as it re-attaches to the back of your eye. With time, the bubble disappears and is replaced with your normal eye fluid.

You must keep your head facing downward or turned to a particular side for up to several weeks after surgery so that the bubble will remain in the right position. In some cases the positioning requirements are full-time, and in others it may be part-time. If you lie in the wrong position, such as face-up, pressure may be applied to other parts of the eye, causing further problems like cataract or glaucoma. To assist you in keeping your face pointed downward, special equipment is available, including adjustable face-down chairs, tabletop face cradles, face-down pillows, and mirrors.