

Anesthesia—Topical

A topical anesthetic is one that is applied directly to the surface of your eye and affects only the area to which it is applied. Topical anesthesia is usually given in the form of eyedrops or gels, or applied with sponges to the surface of the eye.

In some cases, if surgery time will be relatively short, you may only require topical anesthesia. If this is the case, anesthetic drops or gel will be applied to your eye and you will need to follow your ophthalmologist's (Eye M.D.'s) instructions during the surgery to keep eye movement to a minimum. If you need to sneeze or shift position, you will simply need to alert your ophthalmologist beforehand.

Often, if surgery is longer or more involved, the topical anesthetic will be supplemented with other forms of anesthesia to make you more comfortable and perhaps to immobilize your eye.

By using topical anesthesia, your ophthalmologist ensures that you are as comfortable as possible during and following surgery. Since you will not be put to sleep using general anesthesia, your recovery time after surgery will be much quicker, and you will be able to go home the same day. There are usually few side effects or complications due to topical anesthesia.