

As a practicing ophthalmologist I have performed thousands of surgical and laser procedures in my career. I counsel my patients that the majority of surgical interventions for eye disease are safe when performed by an experienced practitioner. I warn patients that complications can and do occur, even in the most seasoned hands. Those hands become seasoned through thousands of hours of directly supervised surgical training over the course of four to six years of ophthalmology residency and optional fellowship training. These four to six years of hands-on training take place AFTER four extremely rigorous years of medical school, in which future practitioners build a foundation in pathology, pharmacology, anatomy, surgery, and systems-based practice. The reasons for the length and rigor of medical school and subsequent ophthalmology training become clear not necessarily in the routine, day-to-day practice of medicine, but when things go wrong or become unexpectedly complex. That is where long years of mentored surgical training, comprehensive medical knowledge, and a 'tool box' of medical and surgical solutions must be brought to bear. These resources simply cannot be gained without the up-front investment of time and energy. I would not want any practitioner without these resources operating on me or family members.