Although treatment of ocular Kaposi’s sarcoma is usually not indicated, conjunctival lesions may be excised for comfort or cosmetic reasons. Lid lesions may be treated with radiation or intralesional chemotherapy.

**THE CLIENT WITH AN ENucleATION**

Occasionally surgical removal of an eye is necessary because of trauma, infection, glaucoma, intractable pain, or malignancy. This procedure is known as **enucleation**.

Enucleation is performed under local or general anesthesia. After the globe is removed, the conjunctiva and eye muscles are sutured to a round implant inserted into the orbit to maintain its shape. A pressure dressing is left in place for 24 to 48 hours. The client is permitted out of bed on the day of surgery. Hemorrhage and infection are the most commonly seen complications.

Postoperative nursing care includes teaching, psychologic support, and observation for potential complications. The client may be instructed to apply warm compresses and instill antibiotic ointment or drops postoperatively.

Within 1 week, a temporary prosthesis called a conformer is fitted into the empty socket. The permanent prosthesis is individually designed to closely resemble the client’s other eye. The prosthesis can be fitted 1 to 2 months after surgery. Often it is difficult to discern which eye is functional and which is the prosthesis. Procedure 45–1 outlines the proper way to remove and reinsert an eye prosthesis when the client is unable to do so.

**THE CLIENT WHO IS BLIND**

Visual impairment exists on a continuum from blindness to decreased visual acuity that can be corrected with refractive lenses to normal or near normal. The legal definition of blindness is visual acuity no better than 20/200 in the better eye with optimal correction, or a visual field of less than 20 degrees (compared to the normal of 180 degrees). Total blindness usually indicates that the client has no light perception at all. In practical terms, a person with a visual deficit sufficient to need assistive devices or aid from other people for normal activities of daily living is considered blind.

Ten to 12 million people in the United States have a visual impairment that cannot be corrected. More than 500,000 Americans are legally blind. Worldwide, between 40 and 50 million people have visual impairment significant enough to be considered blind.

The major worldwide causes of blindness are as follows:

1. Cataracts
2. Trachoma
3. Glaucoma