

Child Injury Laws *Blog*

Surgical Errors: Study Confirms Doctors Routinely Operate On Wrong Body Part

By **Jonathan Rosenfeld** on July 10, 2011

As if going to the hospital for a surgical procedure wasn't stressful enough, a recent study on surgical errors confirms that doctors and hospital staff are responsible for as many as 40 surgical errors on patients every week. Many the surgical errors involve:

- Operating on the wrong body part
- Doing the wrong procedure
- Operating on the wrong side of the body
- Operating on the wrong patient.

Collectively known as wrong-site surgeries, the conclusions were reached after an analysis completed by the Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare, an agency that accredits more than 19,000 health care facilities across the country.

The underlying reasons for the surgical errors blame doctor and staff errors such as:

- Inaccurate documentation
- Scheduling errors

Jonathan Rosenfeld offers legal services relating to: birth injuries, medical malpractice, day care abuse, foster care abuse, swimming pool injuries, automobile accidents, school bus accidents, dog bites, food poisoning, product liability, amusement park accidents and clergy abuse. For more information please visit Child Injury Laws Blog (<http://www.childinjurylaws.com/>) or call Jonathan directly at (888) 424-5757. (www.rosenfeldinjurylawyers.com.)

- Distractions during hospital admission and surgery
- Failure of staff to adhere to risk reduction procedures

Complacency with patient safety protocols is a significant factor in the prevalence of these surgical errors according to the Joint Commission president Dr. Mark Chassin.

They're so uncommon that an individual surgeon or individual hospital ...may not have experienced one of these in the recent past. As a result, they may not recognize the importance of following standardized safety procedures correctly and consistently with every patient.

Acknowledging the severity of wrong-site surgical errors, some medical facilities have implemented safeguards such as: reviewing patient identity, lab work and surgical markings by multiple staff members before a surgery is initiated.

As a **medical malpractice lawyer**, I am always shocked at how the failure to follow many of the most basic safeguards are responsible for patient injury. If such drastic surgical errors are made with respect to basic patient care, I cringe to think of the problems that may arise when patients require more complex medical procedures.

Read more about this patient safety study [here](#).

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