



Figure 6-6. Eye surgeons use an operating microscope to perform cataract surgery.

Undergoing Small-Incision Cataract Removal

Before your procedure, the nurse will cleanse the skin around your eye and cover your eyelids with a sterile plastic drape. Once the surgeon begins the operation, he or she will use a device called a *speculum* to gently hold the eyelids open so you cannot blink. You will be able to see light but not the instruments being used. In fact, patients commonly report that they see a kaleidoscope of beautiful colors and radiating light patterns during their operation. Patients are also aware of a cool, wet sensation as eye drops are used to rinse and moisten the eye's surface throughout the surgery. Although few patients report discomfort, many say they feel pressure on their eyeball at times during the procedure.

With the help of a high-powered operating microscope, the surgeon performs cataract surgery inside the eye (Figure 6-6). The following steps are involved in a small-incision procedure: