36. The tool as set forth in claim 22, wherein only a portion of the tool is coated.

37. A surgical tool comprising: a section adapted to be inserted into an eye adjacent a corneal endothelium; and a polyvinyl alcohol coating covering at least a portion of this section.

38. The tool as set forth in claim 37, wherein the polyvinyl alcohol is in a dehydrated state.

39. The tool as set forth in claim 38, wherein the polyvinyl alcohol coating is rehydratable to provide outer portions of the coating that are sluffable to reduce damage to a corneal endothelium during sliding and nonsliding contact with such endothelium.

40. The tool as set forth in claim 37 wherein the tool is precoated with the polyvinyl alcohol coating being a dehydrated state, and the coated tool is sterile and within a sterility maintaining package.

41. A surgical tool having a surface likely to contact a corneal endothelium during opthalmic surgery, wherein the improvement comprises: a biocompatible water-soluble adherent film coating on such surface for protecting a corneal endothelium, said coating having a dissolution rate sufficiently slow so that at least 40% of the coating is maintained on the device for at least 30 minutes when submerged in an aqueous media at room temperature that has a volume simulating that of the aqueous humor, said coating having portions that are sluffable during sliding and nonsliding contact with a corneal endothelium.

42. A precoated opthalmic surgery tool comprising: a tip section; and a polyvinyl alcohol coating covering at least a portion of the tip.

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