

BLEPHAROPLASTY:
PRE-OPERATIVE PATIENT INFORMATION



Blepharoplasty is a type of surgery to remove excess skin or fat from the eyelids. The aim is to improve hooded eyelids or eye bags resulting from excess skin, muscle and fat usually associated with ageing. As you age, your eyelids stretch, and the muscles supporting them weaken. As a result, excess skin and fat may gather above and below your eyelids. Besides making you look older, severely sagging skin around your eyes can reduce your peripheral vision, especially the upper and outer parts of your field of vision.

THE PROCEDURE

Blepharoplasty is usually performed under local anaesthetic. This is warmed to body temperature and using our specialist surgical technique (a slow injection with a microfine needle) the discomfort while injecting the numbing medication can be minimised significantly. For patients with severe anxiety a general anaesthetic can be arranged.

The procedure to remove excess skin and eyelid fat then lasts approximately 30-45 minutes per side. At the end of surgery, the wound is sutured and antibiotic ointment with a cold damp gauze is loosely applied to the closed eyelid. A discharge pack with sterile water and swabs is provided and a review at 1 week is arranged for the sutures to be removed.

Before your eyelid surgery, you'll undergo:

- A physical examination. Your surgeon will conduct a physical examination, which will include measuring and marking parts of your eyelids.
- A vision examination.
- Eyelid photography. Your eyes will be photographed from different angles. These photos help with planning the surgery, assessing its immediate and long-term effects. All records are kept in the strictest confidence and are not shared without your written permission.

You should tell your surgeon if you have any of the following medical conditions:

- Eye disease, such as glaucoma, dry eye or a detached retina.
- Thyroid disorders, such as Graves' disease or an under or overactive thyroid.
- Cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure or other circulatory disorders.
- Diabetes.

The surgeon will need to know if you are taking any medicines to reduce your risk of blood clots, such as aspirin or warfarin.

Surgery on the upper eyelids generally involves:

- Making a cut (incision) along the eyelid crease in the natural skin fold of the eyelid.
- Removing excess skin, fat or muscle.
- Closing the incision – the scar will usually be hidden in the natural fold of the eyelid.

Surgery on the lower eyelids generally involves:

- Making an incision either just below the lower eyelashes or on the inside of the lower eyelid.
- Repositioning or removing fat from the bags under the eyes, and a removing an amount of excess skin.
- Supporting the muscles and tendon of the eyelid if necessary.
- Closing the incision.

After surgery you may temporarily experience:

- Swelling or discomfort.
- Irritation at the incision sites.
- Blurred vision from the lubricating ointment applied to your eyes.
- Watering eyes or dry eyes.
- Light sensitivity.
- Puffy, numb eyelids.

Your doctor will advise that you take the following steps after surgery:

- Use cold packs (provided) on your eyes for 5 minutes every hour during the evening after surgery. For the following 2 days, use ice packs on your eyes four to five times throughout the day.
- Gently clean your eyelids and use prescribed eyedrops or ointments.
- Avoid straining, heavy lifting and swimming for 2 weeks.

- Avoid strenuous activities, such as aerobics and jogging, for 2 weeks (light exercise is possible after 1 week).
- Avoid smoking.
- Avoid rubbing your eyes.
- If you use contact lenses, don't put them in for about two weeks after surgery.
- Wear darkly tinted sunglasses to protect the skin of your eyelids from sun and wind for 1-2 weeks.
- Sleep with your head slightly higher than your chest for 1 day after surgery.
- Apply cool compresses to reduce swelling.
- After a week, return to the clinic to have any stitches removed.
- For a week, avoid aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, and other medications or herbal supplements that may increase bleeding.

Results



Many people express satisfaction with the results of blepharoplasty, such as a more rested and youthful appearance and increased self-confidence. For some people the results of surgery will last a lifetime, for others heavy eyelids may reoccur due to a variety of risk factors. Patients should be aware that the upper eyelids need a natural fold and some laxity of the skin is needed to be able to open and close the eye.

Bruising and swelling generally subside in 10 to 14 days, which may be when you feel comfortable going out in public again. Scars from the surgical cuts may take months to fade. Take care to protect your delicate eyelid skin from too much sun exposure. Although results are seen immediately after surgery, the outcome will improve over a few weeks as healing takes place.

While eyelid surgery will not stop your eyes from ageing, the procedure is typically very long lasting. It's advisable to take about 1 week off work to recover from the operation. It may be obvious for a little longer than a week that you've just had eyelid surgery. You may not be able to drive for a number of days after the operation. Bruises, scarring and redness may take several weeks to fade.

All surgical procedures carry some risk. Although uncommon, complications from blepharoplasty occasionally include:

- Temporary blurred or double vision.
- Your eyes looking slightly uneven (asymmetrical).
- A pool of blood collecting under the skin (haematoma) – this usually disappears on its own after a few weeks
- Noticeable scarring

Rarely, it can result in more serious problems, including:

- Infection
- Injury to eye muscles or an inability to fully close the eye.
- In lower eyelid surgery the lid can droop away from the eye and turn outwards (ectropion) or become pulled down and show the white of the eye below the iris (eyelid retraction).
- Visual impairment – though this is extremely rare, and many people find that their vision actually improves in the long term after surgery.

Also, this type of operation carries a small risk of:

- Excessive bleeding (especially for patients on blood thinners).
- Dry eyes.
- Abnormal discoloration of the skin of the eyelids.
- Possible loss of vision (extremely rare).
- The need for a follow-up surgery.
- Risks associated with surgery in general, including reaction to anesthesia and blood clots.

The surgeon will explain how likely these risks and complications are, and how they would be treated if they happen. Occasionally, patients find the desired effect was not achieved and feel they need another operation; your surgeon will always be available to discuss further options to achieve the expected outcome.

What to do if you have problems:

If you think your problem is an emergency, please call 01777 711722.

If this is not successful, the direct contact for the senior leadership team is:

07741065722 – Clinical Director

07795577838 – Chief Operating Officer.

Please try and contact our team before attending Accident and Emergency but if this is needed, taking a summary of your care record will be helpful.

For all non-urgent enquiries please contact us via phone or email on;

01777 711 722 info@refinesurgical.co.uk or refinesurgical@gmx.com