



Eyelid Surgery
(Blepharoplasty)

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COSMETIC SURGERY

General information

Blepharoplasty, or eyelid surgery, is performed to remove excess skin from the lids. Excess fat may also be removed or repositioned to improve the shape of the eyelids. The scar along the upper lid runs in the eyelid crease and that along the lower lid just beneath the lashes. Both scars extend to just outside the eye.

Just the upper or lower, or all four eyelids can be operated on at any one time. The upper and lower lid operations are different, with the lower lid operation generally being the bigger procedure. While it is possible to have the surgery under local anaesthetic, most patients prefer to have sedation or a light general anaesthetic (asleep), as it can be a little uncomfortable. Some blepharoplasty procedures can be performed as a day case, while for others an overnight stay in hospital will be necessary.

Other procedures can or may need to be combined with blepharoplasty to achieve the desired result. These include brow lift, fat injection and lid tightening or repositioning. It is also possible to have other aesthetic procedures at the same time.

Preparation for surgery

If you wear contact lenses, you will not be able to do so immediately after your surgery, so have glasses available for use. You will be able to start wearing your contacts again once your eyes have settled and are comfortable. This may take anything from one to several weeks.

Smoking can cause problems with wound healing and increase your risk of a chest infection following general anaesthetic. You must not smoke for at least four weeks before your operation and for four weeks after it.

Please, only take medication prescribed by your doctor for the two weeks before and two weeks after your operation. In particular,

herbal, homeopathic and nutritional supplements (including vitamin E capsules) may contain substances that increase your risk of bleeding and cause sun sensitivity.

Aspirin, and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) increase your risk of bleeding. You should avoid all such medicines for two weeks before and two weeks after your operation. If you are concerned, please check with your GP that it is safe to do so. In certain specific circumstances, you may be prescribed a NSAID for your post-operative pain, which you should take as directed.

If you drink alcohol, it is best to drink only a small amount for the week before the operation and for the first two weeks of your recovery. You should avoid it altogether if you are taking antibiotics or strong pain medication.

Your recovery after the operation will be easier if you are fit and maintain a healthy lifestyle. Regular exercise will help you cope with the operation better.

If you feel unwell leading up to your operation please inform our secretary, as it may be best to reschedule your operation for when you are well.

Do not have surgery if you may be pregnant.

The operation

Please come for your operation in loose-fitting clothing that can be easily and comfortably removed. Slip-on shoes are best, as bending over may be uncomfortable. Avoid nail varnish and heavy make-up. Rings, ear-rings and body-piercings should be removed at home. Bring your normal medication with you and a sufficient supply for the duration of your anticipated stay in hospital.

Whether your procedure is a day case or an overnight stay, someone should accompany you to the hospital and home when you leave hospital.

Getting up and about after the operation is important although it may be uncomfortable to start with. You should try to do this as soon as possible.

Care after your surgery

You will have some stitches in the eyelids which will need to be removed after a few days. These will be held by small tape dressings. Avoid rubbing or disturbing the area while they are in place. You can lightly bathe and splash the area with clean water when bathing, but otherwise keep it dry. Dry it gently by dabbing with a soft towel. If a tape dressing comes loose it can be trimmed back with sharp scissors but should not be pulled off. Avoid make-up to the eyes while they are recovering.

You may find your eyes feel irritated after surgery and be more comfortable using some lubricating eye drops. Put these in carefully to avoid disturbing the stitches.

Avoid bending over. If you need to bend down try to keep your head up. Sleep with two pillows at night for two weeks after your surgery.

After two weeks, start to moisturise and massage your lids paying particular attention to the lower lids. The massaging motion should be gentle and move across the lid and upwards. Avoid massaging the lower lid downwards. Use any plain facial moisturiser (which can contain vitamin E if you wish) and rub it in for 5-10 minutes, three times a day.

All scars should be protected from the sun for the first year after surgery. Wear good sunglasses and shade your face from the sun. Use total sun block around your eyes and lids but avoid getting it into your eyes. Sun exposure of a fresh scar can cause permanent discolouration, resulting in a darkened, visible scar.

You should avoid becoming constipated after your surgery. If you are prone to this then you

must take a stool softener during your recovery.

If you wear contact lenses, these should not be used until your eyes have recovered from surgery and are comfortable.

What to expect after your surgery

You will have some bruising and swelling around the lids. The bruising will settle within two weeks. The swelling can take longer.

The scars usually settle quickly but may become slightly red and raised during the early period of healing. It may then take a few months for them to settle fully and massage can aid this process, once it is comfortable enough to do so. Eyelid closure may feel a little tight for the first few days but this will improve as the swelling resolves.

A follow-up appointment will be arranged for you when you leave hospital.

Driving and activity

All heavy and strenuous activity should be avoided for the first few weeks after your surgery. Graduated activity and exercise can then be started with full, unrestricted activity after twelve weeks, as your comfort allows. You will be able to start driving again when you feel comfortable and are safe doing so. This is usually between one and two weeks. Some car insurance companies have guidelines for driving after surgery and it is always best to check with your own company whether there are any restrictions imposed on you.

Complications

Although complications are uncommon, problems may occur as a result of your surgery. These can result in prolonged recovery but may also have an

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adverse effect on your final result. These include difficulty closing the eye, malposition or swelling of the lid, dryness, irritation, redness or swelling of the eye, poor scarring, bleeding, infection, delayed healing, wound breakdown, persistent numbness or pain, and asymmetry or unevenness. Further surgery may be necessary to correct some of these, should they occur. A charge may have to be made for any additional treatment. If you have a general anaesthetic, there is also a small risk of developing a venous thrombosis (DVT), although measures are taken to minimise this risk.

A number of cases have been reported in the world medical literature of blindness occurring after blepharoplasty when severe post-surgical bleeding has occurred around the optic nerve.

Additional comments

If you have any questions about the information contained in this leaflet or you do not understand something that is included in it, please contact our secretary for clarification.

If you are concerned about your recovery, have bleeding, feel unwell or have increasing pain then please contact Clare Park Hospital where your surgery was performed, my secretary (during office hours), your local A+E Department, or your GP.

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