

Blepharoplasty

Fact Sheet

What is eyelid surgery and how can it improve my appearance?

Eyelid surgery (blepharoplasty) is a procedure to remove fat – usually along with excess skin and muscle - from the upper or lower eyelids. Eyelid surgery can correct drooping upper lids and puffy bags under the eyes – features that can make you look older and more tired and which may even interfere with your vision. Blepharoplasty will not remove crow's feet or lift sagging eyebrows.

Patient selection and preparation

A few medical conditions may make blepharoplasty more risky. These include thyroid problems such as hypothyroidism, dry eye syndrome, hypertension, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Your surgeon will evaluate these possibilities at your initial consultation. Ultimately, the decision to operate will rest with the surgeon, who will take into account your wishes and balance those against what is feasible and appropriate.

All surgery takes place in a fully equipped operating theatre in a hospital in central Bristol. If you opt to have your treatment under sedation, you may eat a light meal and have a non-alcoholic drink up to two hours before surgery. If you are having a general anaesthetic, you must not eat anything for six hours or drink anything for three hours before the procedure. Ideally, you will have someone to look after you for the first few days, so that you can rest quietly.

The procedure

Blepharoplasty usually takes one to two hours, depending on the extent of the surgery. If you are having all four eyelids treated, the surgeon will probably work on the upper lids first, then the lower ones.

Upper blepharoplasty may be carried out under local anaesthesia (with sedation if preferred) or full general anaesthesia. A curved incision is made in the upper eyelid that coincides with the natural skin creases. A crescent-shaped piece of skin, together with fat if appropriate, is removed and the wound closed with very fine sutures.

Lower blepharoplasty can be carried out with sedation or under general anaesthesia. The incision is made a few millimetres under the lower eyelashes and any excess skin tissue is

removed – care is taken to retain youthful contours of the area around the eye and avoid a ‘sunken’ look by repositioning fat if necessary. Again, the wound is closed with very fine sutures. Sometimes the surgeon will be able to perform the surgery through an incision inside the lower eyelid, which has the advantage of leaving no visible scar.

Potential risks and complications of blepharoplasty

When eyelid surgery is performed by a qualified surgeon, complications are infrequent and usually minor. Possible complications of blepharoplasty include:

- Blurred vision – this is quite common and usually resolves within 48 hours
- Dry eyes – this can be avoided by the use of artificial tears for the first two weeks after surgery
- Ptosis – this is drooping of the upper eyelid due to damage to the muscle that opens the eyelid and may require further surgery to correct
- Incomplete closure or opening of the eyelid
- Eversion of the eyelid (ectropia)
- As with any operation, unexpected bleeding and infection are inevitable risks

Recovery

Immediately after surgery, the surgeon will lubricate your eyes with ointment. Your eyelids may feel tight initially. You can control any discomfort with mild pain killers.

Rapid and uneventful recovery is the norm after blepharoplasty. The stitches will be removed 5 to 7 days after surgery. The swelling and bruising around your eyes will gradually subside and you will start to look and feel much better. Most people get back to normal after 10 – 14 days; you can wear make up at this stage if you wish.

You should be able to read or watch television after two or three days. However, you will not be able to wear contact lenses for about two weeks and even then they may feel uncomfortable for a while.

In order to minimize the chance of complications, it is important to:

- Keep your head elevated as much as possible to reduce swelling – a few extra pillows may be necessary
- Apply ice packs to the area for the first few days
- Rest quietly and avoid exertion for 2 – 3 days
- Use any prescribed eye drops since your eyelids may feel dry at first and your eyes may burn or itch
- Avoid smoking (including passive smoking)
- Avoid aspirin or anti-inflammatory medication for at least 3 weeks before surgery

Results of treatment

Healing is a gradual process and your scars which are visible at first may remain slightly pink for six months or more after surgery. The scars will ultimately fade to a thin, nearly invisible white line.

talk to **me**

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this treatment please contact us on:

t. 0117 3250325 **e.** info@cosmetic-medicine.co.uk **w.** www.cosmetic-medicine.co.uk