

By Dr. John Kippen



Rejuvenating your eyes

The eyelids are one of the first places on the face that show the signs of aging. But with a plastic surgery procedure called Blepharoplasty, this area can be rejuvenated.

Both men and women complain of drooping upper eyelids or puffiness of the lower eyelids, giving them a tired or angry appearance.

Blepharoplasty is a surgical procedure

designed to remove excess skin folds and bulging fat bags from the eye area. It rejuvenates the upper part of the face, making the patient look fresher and more relaxed, consequently feeling more self-confident. Blepharoplasty is often combined with a browlift to lift sagging eyebrows or a face- or neck-lift to improve the lower part of the face.

A careful assessment of a patient's suitability for surgery is essential in

blepharoplasty. This includes a history of thyroid disease, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, glaucoma, visual impairment, dry eyes, allergic conjunctivitis, smoking and medication. Any of these may affect the surgical outcome.

At least two preoperative visits to your plastic surgeon is essential to ensure a realistic expectation of the surgery. Apart from discussing the outcomes of any surgery, your surgeon should show you before and after photos of other patients who have undergone the surgery, along with information.

Most insurance companies and Medicare do not cover eyelid surgery unless upper-lid skin excess affects or obscures vision. If the upper-eyelid skin touches or hangs over the lash/eyelid margin, then Medicare and health insurance companies will contribute to the cost of the surgery.

Surgery can be performed under local anaesthetic, twilight sedation or general anaesthetic, depending on what the surgery involves and the patient's preference. The procedure usually requires either a one day or overnight stay in hospital.

Upper eyelid incisions are hidden in natural creases, while lower eyelid incisions usually run just under the eyelash line. Both incisions may extend into the crows feet (smile lines) at the outer edge of the eye. Through these incisions variable amounts of skin, muscle and fat are removed or repositioned, and the structural elements supporting the lids can be strengthened or repositioned. An upper-eyelid crease can also be added in Asian eyes if desired.

Once the operation is completed, the suture lines are usually taped. It is best to sleep with the head in an elevated position for the first few days to help

minimise the swelling. Pain is usually minimal but strenuous activity, lifting, stooping and bending should be avoided for the first week or two.

Bruising and swelling in the eye area usually lasts between one to three weeks and is variable in extent and duration. Eyes are commonly red and feel dry or itchy. Ointment helps keep the eyes moist, especially at night, as the lids may not fully close for a few weeks. Sutures are removed after five days. Light sensitivity, excess tearing, and blurred vision may be present for a couple of weeks but rarely longer.

Most patients can begin driving and return to work within one to two weeks. Eye make-up can be used from about two weeks and is useful if there is persistent bruising.

Infections, double vision, and serious complications leading to eyesight deterioration are very rare. Ectropion (lower-lid droop) can occur after lower eyelid surgery, but can be prevented with massage after surgery. A procedure known as canthopexy at the time of surgery can temporarily lift and support the lower eyelid. Small whiteheads and

cysts can occur along the suture lines, but these can easily be removed under local anaesthetic in the rooms.

Symmetry following eyelid surgery is not always exact. The aim of the surgery is a significant improvement, but perfection cannot be guaranteed. The improvement gained from the surgery is permanent but the aging process does continue.

Eyelid surgery does not directly correct crows feet creases, temple wrinkles, dark lower-lid rings or lift drooping eyebrows. Other procedures are available to correct these problems.

To sum up, removal of skin folds and fat bulges from the eyelids is a commonly performed procedure with a very high degree of patient satisfaction and low risk of complications. It rejuvenates the upper part of the face, making the patient look fresher and more relaxed, leading to a greater sense of self-confidence. [PL](#)

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