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BLEPHAROPLASTY (Eyelid Surgery)

Blepharoplasty is a surgical procedure for enhancing the upper or lower eyelids. The techniques use incisions in the eyelids to remove excess skin and address the underlying fat, which produces drooping and a bulging, puffy appearance. The desired result is to produce a pleasing, smooth contour to the lids.

Ageing causes the skin around the eyes and face to loosen producing lax skin and wrinkles. Relaxation of other tissues around the eyes causes the underlying fat to push outward, resulting in a puffy and tired appearance.

Your appearance after blepharoplasty will be influenced by your general state of health, the condition of the skin of your eyes and face, your age, weight and other factors. Each person is unique and during your consultation, factors that apply to you in particular will be discussed.

Quality of skin

Good skin is a desirable attribute in all patients. Skin folds on the eyelids can be removed, giving a more pleasing appearance. Wrinkles in the lateral border of the eye, the so-called "crow's feet", are usually not improved with blepharoplasty. Wrinkles on the lower eyelids may be improved with lower blepharoplasty, but fine lines are affected by skin quality and are likely to reappear after a period of time.

If you have chronic eye problems, dry or itchy eyes, diabetes, endocrine problems or other medical conditions, you may require an evaluation by an appropriate consultant prior to your surgery. This may include referral by your family doctor to an Ophthalmologist.

Permanency of results

Most patients have good long-term results with surgery. Occasionally secondary revisions may be required. Younger patients may experience some recurrence of the apparent skin excess on their eyelids as they age due to sagging of their eyebrows and stretching of their skin.

Eye shape and symmetry

Whilst your surgeon will always aim to produce eyelids that are equal, perfect symmetry is impossible to achieve. Most patients normally have slight asymmetry and your particular problems will be discussed.

Scars

Every attempt to minimise your scars will be made. Scars are placed in normal skin folds where they are inconspicuous and easily hidden. Laterally, the scars may extend into the crow's feet area where they will usually be inconspicuous. In most patients, the scars will be red or pigmented for 1 to 2 months and gradually fade thereafter.

The scars are rarely troublesome. Nevertheless, all scars are permanent and their final appearance is not totally predictable. Any previous scar hypertrophy (widening or thickening) that you may have may reflect your final scar.

Anaesthesia

General anaesthesia or heavy sedation is used for most patients. Some patients may be suitable for a local anaesthetic and if this is your preference then please notify your surgeon during your consultation.



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Duration of the operation

The operation lasts 1 to 2 hours but combined upper and lower eyelid surgery will take longer.

Hospital stay

Blepharoplasty is usually performed as a day-case, though if upper and lower lids are done together, it may be preferable to stay in hospital overnight. If you are coming from out of town, you should plan to be available for a few days post-operatively.

After surgery

Gel icepacks should be used for the first day or two after surgery. Sutures are removed 5-7 days after surgery. You will usually be given an antibiotic gel to apply 2 to 3 times daily. You should not get the wounds wet for the first 24 hours. Thereafter shower as normal and apply the ointment as instructed.

Pain medication will be prescribed as required. There may be mild discomfort after surgery, which is controlled by your medication. You will be seen 4 to 7 days after surgery and then at around 6 weeks after this. Vigorous sports should be avoided for around 4 weeks.

Sleep on your back with your head raised on 2 pillows for 1 week.

For the first week following surgery, the treated areas will be swollen, bruised and possibly appear distorted. After this, the swelling associated with the surgery begins to subside, but your final outcome may not be apparent until as long as 3 to 6 months after surgery.

Photographs

Pre-operative photographs may usually be taken. These do not show your face. They are important aids in planning and performing surgery and become a permanent part of your patient record. Intra-operative photographs may be taken during your surgery if we are required to do so by Medicare. Post-operative photographs may also be taken.

Complications and untoward results

Serious complications very rarely occur with this kind of surgery. You may have bruising which lasts to 3 weeks, although it can occasionally be longer. As with any surgery, bleeding, infection and other complications are possible.

Rarely, bleeding around the eyeball can occur, which may require emergency decompression. Blindness is an extremely rare but serious complication. The risk of this is around 1 in 40000. You should avoid any medications that can increase bleeding for 10-14 days before surgery to reduce this risk.

Should you not understand any of the foregoing, or should you want further information, please ask. Occasional questions will arise after you have left your consultation. Feel free to call for additional information. If necessary, additional consultation visits can be scheduled. Find out all you need to know. It is our desire that all patients are fully informed.

This information included in this sheet is general information only. Please contact the surgery on (08) 9380 0333 or alternative phone numbers as shown on your appointment card if you have any concerns regarding your post-operative recovery.