

Eyelid Surgery (blepharoplasty)

Written by

Monday, 13 December 2010 03:31 - Last Updated Tuesday, 21 December 2010 09:22

Eyelid surgery (blepharoplasty) is a procedure to remove fat-usually along with excess skin and muscle-from the upper and lower eyelids. Eyelid



Illustration 1: As people age, the eyelid skin stretches, muscles weaken, and fat accumulates around the eyes, causing "bags" above and below.

surgery can correct drooping upper lids and puffy bags below your eyes-features that make you look older and more tired than you feel, and may even interfere with your vision. However, it won't remove crow's feet or other wrinkles, eliminate dark circles under your eyes, or lift sagging eyebrows. Blepharoplasty can be done alone, or in conjunction with other facial surgery procedures such as a laser skin resurfacing, facelift or brow lift.

If you're considering eyelid surgery, this information will give you a basic understanding of the procedure-when it can help, how it's performed, and what results you can expect. It may not answer all of your questions, since a lot depends on the individual patient.

The best candidates for eyelid surgery

Blepharoplasty can enhance your appearance and your self-confidence, but it won't necessarily change your looks to match your ideal, or cause other people to treat you differently. Before you decide to have surgery, think carefully about your expectations your reasons for wanting surgery and discuss them with an appropriate cosmetic surgeon.

The best candidates for eyelid surgery are men and women who are physically healthy, psychologically stable, and realistic in their expectations. Most are 35 or older, but if droopy, baggy eyelids run in your family, you may decide to have eyelid surgery at a younger age.

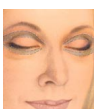


Illustration 2: Before surgery, your surgeon marks the incision sites, following the

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natural lines and creases of the upper and lower eyelids.

A few medical conditions can make blepharoplasty more risky. They include thyroid problems such as hypothyroidism and Graves' disease, dry eye or lack of sufficient tears, high blood pressure or other circulatory disorders, cardiovascular disease and diabetes. A detached retina or glaucoma is also reason for caution; check with your ophthalmologist before you have surgery. All surgery carries some uncertainty and risk.

When eyelid surgery is performed by a qualified plastic-cosmetic surgeon, like Dr. Percival De Leon, complications are rare and usually correctable. Nevertheless, there is always a possibility of complications, including infection or a reaction to the anesthesia. You can reduce your risks by closely following your surgeons instructions both before and after surgery. The minor complications that occasionally follow blepharoplasty include double or blurred vision for a few days; temporary swelling at the corner of the eyelids; and a slight asymmetry in healing or scarring. Tiny whiteheads may appear after your stitches are taken out; Following surgery, some patients may have difficulty closing their eyes when they sleep; Another very rare complication is ectropion, a pulling down of the lower lids. In this case, further surgery may be required.

Planning your surgery

The initial consultation with our consultant is very important. We will need to discuss your complete medical history, so check your own records ahead of time and be ready to provide this information. Be sure to inform your physician and surgeon if you have any allergies; if you're taking any vitamins, aspirin, ibuprofen, medications (prescription or over-the-counter), or other drugs; and if you smoke.

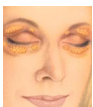


Illustration 3: Underlying fat along with excess skin and muscle, is removed during the operation

During your consultation, you should also provide any relevant information from your ophthalmologist (if any) or the record of your most recent eye exam (if any). If you wear glasses or contact lenses, be sure to bring them along at the time of your initial consultation.

You should carefully discuss your goals and expectations for this surgery with your surgeon. You'll need to discuss whether to do all four eyelids or just the upper or lower ones, whether skin as well as fat will be removed, and whether any additional procedures are appropriate.

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Our consultants and cosmetic surgeon will explain the techniques and anesthesia which shall be used, where the surgery will be performed, and the risks and costs involved. (Note: Most insurance policies don't cover eyelid surgery, unless you can prove that drooping upper lids interfere with your vision. Check with your insurer.) Don't hesitate to ask any questions you may have, especially those regarding your expectations and concerns about the results.

Preparing for your surgery

De Leon Cosmetic Surgery Center will give you specific instructions on how to prepare for surgery, including guidelines on eating and drinking, smoking, and taking or avoiding certain vitamins and medications. Carefully following these instructions will help your surgery go more smoothly. While you're making preparations, be sure to arrange for someone to drive you home after your surgery, and to help you out for a few days if needed.

Where your surgery will be performed



Illustration 4: Your surgeon closes the incision with fine absorbable sutures, which will leave nearly invisible scars.

Eyelid surgery is usually performed in our office-based facility or clinic set-up, on an outpatient basis; rarely does it require an inpatient stay.

Types of anesthesia

Eyelid surgery is usually performed under local anesthesia-which numbs the area around your eyes. However, you may feel some tugging or occasional discomfort.

The surgery

With Dr. Percival T. De Leon, Blepharoplasty usually takes 40 minutes to at most one hour depending on the extent of the surgery. If you're having all four eyelids done, Dr. P. De Leon will work on the upper lids first, then the lower ones. In a typical procedure, Cosmetic Surgeon makes incisions following the natural lines of your eyelids: in the creases of your upper lids, and just below the lashes in the lower lids. The incisions may extend into the crow's feet or laugh lines at the outer corners of your eyes. Working through these incisions, the Cosmetic Surgeon will separate the skin from underlying fatty tissue and muscle, remove excess fat, and then trim sagging skin and muscle. The incisions are then closed with very fine sutures. If you have a pocket of fat beneath your lower eyelids but don't need to have any skin removed, your surgeon

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may recommend a transconjunctival blepharoplasty. In this procedure the incision is made inside your lower eyelid, leaving no visible scar. It is usually performed on younger patients with thicker, more



Illustration 5: In a transconjunctival blepharoplasty a tiny incision is made inside the lower eyelid and fat is removed with fine forceps. No skin is removed and the incision is closed with dissolving sutures.

elastic skin. Often this procedure is accompanied with laser skin resurfacing of the eyelid skin.

After your surgery

After surgery, the nurse will lubricate your eyes with ointment and may apply a bandage. Your eyelids may feel tight and sore as the anesthesia wears off, but you can control any discomfort with the pain medication prescribed by your surgeon. If you feel any severe pain, inform our clinic immediately.

You will be instructed to keep your head elevated for few days, and to use cold compresses to reduce swelling and bruising. (Bruising varies from person to person; it reaches its peak during the first week, and generally lasts anywhere from two weeks to a month.)

You'll be shown how to care for your eyes, which may be gummy for a week or so. Frequently we recommend eye drops, since your eyelids may feel dry at first and your eyes may burn or itch. For the first few days you may also experience excessive tearing, sensitivity to light, and temporary changes in your eyesight, such as blurring or double vision.

Our clinic will follow your progress very closely for the first week or two. The stitches will be removed in 5-7 days after surgery. Once they're gone, the swelling and discoloration around your eyes will gradually subside, and you'll start to look and feel much better.

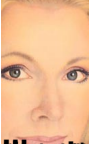
Getting back to normal

You should be able to read or watch television soon after surgery. However, you won't be able to wear contact lenses for about two weeks, and

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