

Patient information

Adult ptosis

Ptosis is a medical term for drooping of the upper eyelid which occurs when the edge of the upper eyelid with the lashes falls too low. When the edge of the eyelid covers part of the pupil, it blocks the upper part of the vision. In severe cases it is necessary to tilt your head backwards, or to lift the eyelid with your fingers in order to see out from underneath.

In many cases, a drooping upper eyelid results from aging of previous normal structures. Typically, the tendon that attaches the 'lifting' muscle to the eyelid stretches and the eyelid falls too low. This can also happen in people who wear contact lenses for many years.

If the muscle that lifts the eyelid has normal strength, then surgical correction of the stretched tendon may be required.

In many patients, the treatment for ptosis is surgery.

Surgery

Ptosis surgery is usually carried out as a day case procedure. In nearly all cases of ptosis in adults, surgery is performed with a local anaesthetic. This means the surgeon can adjust the height of the eyelid whilst you are awake which gives the best chance of a good result.

Post-operative care

After the operation, it is normal for a 'pressure dressing' to be left in place for 24 hours. This normally consists of eye pads and elastoplast which is firmly applied. This is intended to minimize post-operative swelling and bruising. When you remove the pad, there may be some blood or discharge around the

eye. Clean the eye with cooled boiled water if necessary. The sutures used are normally dissolvable and will not need to be removed.

It is normal for antibiotics, in either drop or ointment form, to be used after the operation.

As the local anaesthetic starts to wear off, it is quite common for the eyelid to ache. This requires mild painkillers such as paracetamol.

What to expect

Initially the eyelids are often bruised and swollen. The bruising can take up to 2-3 weeks to clear and there may be some mild residual upper lid swelling for up to 6 weeks. It is often too early to judge the final outcome immediately after surgery, although every attempt is made to achieve the best cosmetic outcome for each individual. The scars will fade gradually over the first year but tend not to be obvious as they are within the crease of the eyelid.

You will usually be reviewed 1 to 2 weeks following your operation, although sometimes you may need to be seen on the first post-operative day. You should not wear eye make-up for 2 weeks following surgery and contact lens wear is best avoided for 4 weeks to allow the eyelid to fully heal inside.

The risks include bleeding, infection and loss of vision but these complications are very rare. A temporary inability to fully close the eye after ptosis surgery is common. Lubricant drops and ointments are frequently useful. It is also important to know that although improvement of the lid height is usually achieved, perfect symmetry in the height and contour of the two eyelids and full eyelid movement is sometimes not achieved. More than one operation is occasionally required.

If you wish to contact the

EYE DEPARTMENT

Telephone 01284 713815 / 01284 712636

Monday - Thursday 9:00am to 5:00pm and Friday 9:00am to 1:00pm

At the weekend and out of hours:

Telephone 01284 713000 and ask to speak to the 'on call' ophthalmic doctor