

Patient information

Blepharoplasty

What is blepharoplasty?

Blepharoplasty is an operation which removes excess skin (dermatochalasis) from the upper eyelids. This operation can be carried out on the NHS if the excess skin is affecting vision. It cannot be done on the NHS if it is just a cosmetic problem.

What are the causes of excess upper lid skin?

Excess skin is often due to ageing changes. Sometimes episodes of swelling of the eyelid due to infection or allergy can stretch the skin.

What does the blepharoplasty operation involve?

Removal of excess upper eyelid skin is carried out as day case surgery, generally under local anaesthesia. Anaesthetic drops will be put in your eyes. Your face will be cleaned with antiseptic solution and sterile drapes will be placed around your face.

The surgeon will use a pen to mark out the skin to be removed. Anaesthetic is then injected under the eyelid skin, which feels sharp and stings for less than twenty seconds. After this the eyelid will be numb and the surgery will not hurt. You will have your eyes closed during surgery.

The excess skin is cut away. The skin wounds are then closed with absorbable sutures, which will dissolve and fall out over the next few weeks. At the end of the operation the antiseptic is washed off, ointment is put on the wounds, and a dressing applied to one eye only.

What happens after the operation?

You should not drive yourself home after the operation. Before you leave you will be given drops and ointment to use for one to two weeks after the surgery.

Remove the dressing the following day or as directed. Do not worry if there is some blood on the eye pad when you remove it.

Clean the eyelids gently with tissues or gauze soaked in cooled, boiled water.

If your eye feels sore when the anaesthetic wears off, take simple painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. Normally, the discomfort will settle within a day or two. It is normal for the eyelids to appear swollen and bruised for some time after this operation and there may be a little bleeding from the eyelids for a short time.

Most forms of light exercise and a normal work pattern may be resumed a few days after surgery.

Eyelid makeup can be worn from about three weeks after surgery.

If you have **severe** pain, not relieved by simple painkillers, please ring the Eye Treatment Centre for advice (see end of leaflet for contact details).

Eyelids normally heal very well and the wound is hidden in the natural skin crease of the lid.

You will have a follow up appointment about four to six weeks after surgery.

What problems can occur after the operation?

- Bruising and swelling of the eyelids is common. The surface of the eyeball may also swell slightly (chemosis). These changes will settle after a few weeks.
- Dry, gritty eyes for a few weeks can be helped with lubricant eye drops and

ointment. The vision may be slightly blurred for a few days.

- A post-operative infection may develop in the lids when they would become tender, red and swollen and the wound may breakdown. If this happens then you should contact the hospital, as antibiotics may be needed to treat this and allow the lids to heal. It might be necessary to re-stitch the wound once the infection has settled.
- Sometimes some loose skin persists, often at the outer end of the eyelid and there may be some asymmetry between the two eyes.
- Bleeding after the operation is usually slight and stops within a short time. If bleeding continues you should contact the hospital in case further treatment is required.
- Extremely rarely, severe bleeding around or behind the eye can cause loss of vision.

Contact details

Eye Department

Telephone 01284 713815 / 01284 712636

Monday to Thursday, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Friday 9:00 am to 1:00 pm

At the weekend and out of hours:

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

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo) <https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>



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