

# Ectropion

## Information for patients

### What is an ectropion?

Ectropion is the term used to describe the lower eyelid turning outwards and drooping away from the eye.

### What causes an ectropion?

The commonest cause is looseness of the muscles in the eyelid, usually associated with age. It can also be caused by previous scarring or trauma, or weakness of the muscles (facial palsy).

### What are the symptoms of an ectropion?

You may experience:

- A dry, sore and red eye
- Watering of the eye, or sticky discharge
- Rarely, reduced vision due to damage to the cornea (clear part of the front of the eye)

### What can you do to help?

You can use artificial tears to keep the eye comfortable. These may have been prescribed during your appointment today but are also available over-the-counter from your local pharmacy. Your pharmacist will be able to give you advice on the most suitable ones.

In some cases, you can massage ointment onto the affected eyelid skin – you will be told if you need to do this.

### How can it be treated?

You can have an operation to tighten the lower eyelid with the aim of returning it to a better position, and thereby help the eye to feel more comfortable and to improve the watering.

In cases where the ectropion is due to scarring, trauma or facial palsy, a more extensive operation may be needed and may involve a skin graft – you will be told you if you need this.

### What are the risks of ectropion surgery?

- Bleeding from the surgical site – this usually settles within a few hours
  - Bruising and swelling of the eyelids – this usually settles within a few weeks
  - Scarring after surgery – this usually fades over time
  - Infection of the surgical site – we provide you with antibiotic drops/ ointment to use after surgery which helps prevent this
  - Recurrence of the ectropion – the lid may droop outwards again. This is uncommon but may necessitate further surgery. It can occur soon after the surgery, or months/years later
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Sometimes there may be a slight asymmetry between the eyelids after surgery. Please note that cosmetic surgery is unavailable on the NHS, so further surgery to address this is likely to be declined.

### **What to expect on the day of your surgery?**

The operation is usually done under local anaesthetic, which means you will be awake during the operation; however, you will have an injection into the affected eyelid to numb the area and eye drops to make you feel more comfortable.

Stitches will be used to close the surgical site and a dressing will be placed over your eye at the end of the operation. As your eye will be covered after the operation, we advise you not to drive to the hospital, and if possible have a friend or relative accompany you home after the operation.

### **What happens after surgery?**

You can remove the dressing over the eye in the morning after surgery. You will have eye drops/ ointment to be used once the dressing is removed.

You will have a follow up appointment in the eye clinic (this maybe a telephone or video appointment if stitch removal is not required) and your stitches can be removed at this visit if needed. Dissolvable stitches are commonly used for this operation and may therefore not need to be removed. They will drop off in time but may take up to 3 months to disappear completely.

### **If you choose not to have surgery, what could happen?**

The position of your eyelid is unlikely to improve without an operation. The watering and soreness will likely persist, and there is ongoing risk of damage to the surface of the eye.

**Please use this space to write any notes or questions you may have:**

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**Further information and advice can be obtained from:**

**British Oculoplastic Surgery Society**

<https://www.bopss.co.uk/public-information/common-conditions/>

**NHS 111**

**NHS Choices online**

 **111**

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

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**Telephone:** ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

**Email:** [mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net](mailto:mtw-tr.palsoffice@nhs.net)

**or visit their office** at either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells Hospital between 9.00am and 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

You can be confident that your care will not be affected by highlighting any areas of concern or making a complaint. The Trust will retain a record of your contact, which is held separately to any medical records. If you are acting on behalf of a patient, we may need to obtain the patient's consent in order to protect patient confidentiality. More information on PALS or making a complaint can be found on the Trust's website: [www.mtw.nhs.uk](http://www.mtw.nhs.uk) or pick up a leaflet from main reception.

Issue date: February 2024

Database reference: RWF-HNK-OPH-LEA-PAT-73

Review date: February 2028

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