

Upper Lid Blepharoplasty

Information for patients

What is a blepharoplasty?

Blepharoplasty is an operation to remove problematic excess upper eyelid skin (a condition known as dermatochalasis).

What causes dermatochalasis?

The commonest cause is loss of elasticity of eyelid skin due to age, which can make the upper eyelids appear droopy or baggy. It can also be caused by previous eyelid swelling or inflammation, which can stretch the skin. In addition, droopy brows can contribute to the overall eyelid appearance.

What are the symptoms of dermatochalasis?

You may experience:

- Excess eyelid skin overhanging the lashes causing a “hooded appearance”, or a feeling of “pressure”
- Reduction in your upper field of vision if the excess upper eyelid skin covers part of your eye
- A sensation of tired or heavy eyelids

These symptoms can be worse if you are tired.

How can it be treated?

You can have an operation to remove the excess upper eyelid skin with the aim of improving the eyelid position and thereby increasing your upper field of vision.

You will need to have a test that shows that the excess upper eyelid skin is affecting your field of vision before you can have this surgery on the NHS, as otherwise this operation is considered cosmetic surgery. Blepharoplasty surgery to treat excess lower eyelid skin is unavailable on the NHS as it is also considered cosmetic surgery.

What are the risks of blepharoplasty 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 reduce the risk of this
- Dry eyes – this can be treated with artificial tear drops, which may need to be used long term

The following are uncommon but may necessitate further surgery:

- Removing too much or too little of the excess eyelid skin
- Recurrence of loose eyelid skin
- Poor upper eyelid position including inability to close eyes fully

Sometimes there may be 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. The amount of skin to be removed will be measured prior to the local anaesthetic injection.

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 recommend that you have a friend or relative accompany you home after the operation.

What happens after surgery?

You can remove the dressing over the eye 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. You will be advised after the surgery whether you have dissolvable stitches, or whether you will need to come back for stitch removal.

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

The excess eyelid skin is unlikely to improve without an operation. The amount of loose or baggy skin may gradually worsen with time and thereby cause further reduction in your upper field of vision. This may lead to problems with driving and increased risk of falls. However, it will not damage your eye or vision in any way if you choose not to have surgery.


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

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

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Telephone: ☎ 01622 224960 or ☎ 01892 632953

Email: 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.

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