

Eyelid Surgery

Admit it: your eyes are your best feature. Dramatic changes in surgical procedures over the last few years have made eyelid surgery (blepharoplasty) very effective, and one of the most requested elective cosmetic surgeries. Eyelid surgery can dramatically enhance your facial appearance, making your eyes look fresher and more alert.

WHAT IS EYELID SURGERY?

Eyelid surgery is a surgical procedure to remove fat and excess skin and muscle from the eyelids. This surgery can correct drooping upper lids and puffy or baggy lower lids. Eyelid surgery is not a lift. It will not remove wrinkles or lines around the eyes, nor will it alter the tone of dark circles under the eyes. Eyelid surgery can add a crease to Asian eyes, but it will not remove indications of race or ethnicity.

ARE YOU A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR EYELID SURGERY?

Eyelid surgery can diminish the appearance of tiredness and aging, making you look more alert and energetic. If drooping lids decrease your ability to see, eyelid surgery can improve your eyesight. The best candidates for eyelid surgery are men and women who are physically and mentally healthy, with realistic expectations about the results of surgery. Eyelid surgery is usually performed on patients over 35, but if hereditary influences cause excessive drooping or bags, the procedure may be an option for younger people.

Medical conditions such as hypothyroidism or Graves' disease, dry eye or tearing problems, high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and other circulatory disorders raise the risks of eyelid surgery and should be discussed with your surgeon prior to the procedure. If you have a detached retina or glaucoma, check with your ophthalmologist about the risks of surgery before you see a surgeon.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF EYELID SURGERY?

Complications from blepharoplasty are usually minor and may include temporary blurred or double vision. Swelling at the corners of the eyelids may occur for a few days. The healing process may be uneven, with one eye healing faster than the other, and scars are not always symmetrical. Sometimes tiny whiteheads form after stitches are taken out, but they can be removed by your surgeon. In rare cases, patients will have difficulty closing their eyes when they sleep, which can become a permanent condition. In very rare cases, a complication causes the lower lid to droop away from the eye. Subsequent surgery may be required to alleviate this condition.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSULTATION

Consultation for eyelid surgery is very important. Your surgeon will need your complete medical history. Be sure to tell your surgeon about any allergies you have, about any prescription or over the counter medications you take, if you smoke, and if you take vitamins, herbal supplements, or other drugs.

You will need to provide your surgeon with relevant information from your ophthalmologist and/or the records from your most recent eye exam. Bring any corrective lenses, glasses or contact lenses with you.

Your surgeon will discuss the procedure in detail, including any pre-operative and post-operative procedures. It's important to discuss your expectations with the doctor and to ask any questions or voice any concerns you might have.

THE SURGERY

Eyelid surgery can take up to 3 hours if both the upper and lower lids are being done. Eyelid surgery can be performed using a local anesthetic and an oral or intravenous sedative, or the surgeon may choose a general anesthesia. The surgeon will make incisions around the eye to remove fat and excess skin. Very fine sutures are used to stitch the wound, and bandages may be applied after surgery.

RECOVERY

Immediately following the surgery, the doctor may apply an ointment to keep your eyes lubricated. Because you will be drowsy from the anesthesia and may have impaired vision, you will need someone to drive you home and provide some assistance for a day or two. The doctor may prescribe mild pain medication to alleviate any discomfort.

You will need to keep your head elevated for a few days. You may also need to use a cold compress to reduce swelling and bruising. Bruising occurs differently on everyone, but usually peaks during the first week after surgery. Bruising may last for up to a month.

Keeping your eyes clean and moist after surgery is important. Your doctor will recommend eye drops and cleaning procedures for you to follow.

Your stitches will most likely be removed a week after surgery. You should not wear contact lenses for about two weeks after the procedure. Most people are ready to return to work or public life in a week to 10 days. Activities that raise blood pressure and rigorous exercise should be avoided for 3 to 5 weeks. You should also avoid drinking alcohol for 3 to 5 weeks.