

# Lower Blepharoplasty

## Patient Information

### Background

As we age, eyelid skin frequently becomes a concern, prompting people to consider treatment to relieve heaviness and alleviate a tired appearance. The lower eyelids are a complex structure. They work against gravity and unfortunately, the integral strength of the eyelid reduces as we age which leads to a lack of natural support.

As the lower eyelid ages, the skin can become saggy and loose. Ageing skin also loses the ability to bounce back to being flat after movement is lost, therefore muscle action is more likely to leave permanent lines that manifest themselves as 'crow's feet'.

### What is lower blepharoplasty?

Lower blepharoplasty is a surgical procedure performed to improve the appearance of sagging, loose skin of the undereye area by removing redundant skin without undermining. Where required, lower blepharoplasty may be combined with fat redrape to reposition fatty bulges. Because the fat redrape technique involves deeper level surgery, recovery time is significantly extended.

### What are the expected results of the surgery?

Lower eyelid surgery is often performed to define the shape and contour of the lower eye area. It should not be obvious that you have had surgery, but you should look more rested and youthful as a result.

### Is the procedure right for me?

A detailed consultation with your consultant plastic surgeon is essential prior to undergoing any surgical procedure. During the consultation, your surgeon will discuss your area/s of concern, desired improvements, options available (including no treatment at all) and expected outcomes. Your surgeon will examine your face and eye area and may take some photographs for your medical records. You will be given a 'cooling-off' period of at least 2 weeks between initial consultation and the date of your operation to ensure you have ample time to reflect on all aspects of the procedure before proceeding (although please bear in mind the waiting lists for our Surgeons mean this period is invariably significantly longer).

### How is the procedure carried out?

Should lower blepharoplasty be agreed upon as the most suitable treatment, the procedure will be carried out by your surgeon under either local or general anaesthetic in our

state-of-the-art operating theatre. The procedure commonly takes around 120 minutes to perform and after the anaesthetic is given, it is entirely pain free. The elements that need to be considered with lower lid blepharoplasty are skin, muscle, and fat. The approach to the lower lid is either through a small incision under the lash line or, if there is no skin excess, through the inner aspect of the eyelid (transconjunctival). If skin is in excess then it may be removed, often by taking a small strip away just beneath the eyelash line. The amount that can be removed is to some extent dependent on the tone of the lower eyelid as in loose lids excessive removal can lead to lid malposition. Reducing skin is a careful balancing act between skin tightness and lid position. If muscle is excessive, a small amount can be trimmed away but as muscle contributes to lid structure this needs to be done carefully. Excess lateral muscle action leading to smile lines may be effectively treated with botulinum toxin. If fat bulges are present, the fat may be reduced, repositioned, and re-contoured. Occasionally, fat may need to be added to hollows. This is accomplished with fat grafting either at the time of lower lid blepharoplasty or as a separate procedure. The wound edges are carefully closed, and fine steristrip dressings applied.

### Aftercare and recovery

After surgery it is imperative that you rest to allow the area to settle. You should take it as easy as possible for the first 2 days post-surgery, remembering that the less you do, the less you will bruise. Try not to bend over or strain and avoid exercise altogether for these first few days. This ensures that your blood pressure remains stable, reducing the chances of bleeding and subsequent swelling and bruising. As a rule of thumb, avoid doing anything that would make your face redden during this initial stage of healing. This may range from avoiding hot baths to ensuring you do not exert yourself through lifting, for example. Patients generally experience minimum discomfort after this procedure and healing usually progresses quickly. After surgery the area will bruise a little reaching a maximum after 48 hours, gradually settling over subsequent weeks. The very fine stitch is easily removed after a week, at which point the eyelids will appear swollen and crepey for a few days. We advise you start gently massaging the incision line with a light eye cream to help soften the scar and speed up the healing process 10 days after surgery. This should be applied with the ring finger, gently working outwards from the nose towards the ear. Normally, you will need a week off work and

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will need to avoid vigorous exercise for around six weeks whilst deeper level healing takes place. Showering is permitted on the second post-operative day. Scars tend to be quite red initially, turning to purple and then fading to white. Most patients will form good quality scars over time.

### What to expect after surgery

The surgery is usually performed as a day case under local or general anaesthesia. Our highly experienced medical team will be on hand during your stay to care for your needs. The operation usually takes around two hours to complete. If your surgery is performed as a day case and you go home on the same day. Your eye area will feel tight and sore. Simple painkillers should be enough to keep you comfortable.

### Risks and Complications

All surgical procedures are associated with risks. Your Surgeon will explain these in detail during initial consultation, enabling you to reach an informed decision on whether you wish to proceed. Serious complications are uncommon, however patients should be aware of the following complications prior to undergoing upper blepharoplasty surgery-

- Anaesthesia risks including allergic reaction, blood clots, heart attack, stroke and death
- Infection
- Healing problems
- Extrusion of deep stitches
- Loss of blood supply to skin
- Change of the colour of skin
- Bleeding, swelling and bruising
- Asymmetry
- Poor scarring of skin
- Increased or reduced sensation
- Damage to deeper structures
- Unsatisfactory results
- Pain, which may persist
- Change over time
- Allergic reaction
- Possibility of revisional surgery

Lower blepharoplasty does not improve any heaviness in the upper eyelid, it is a technique to reduce sagging, bulging skin below the eye. Following surgery, patients can expect to achieve a more defined, smoother lower eye area, but it will never be tight.

### Alternative treatments

Radio-frequency (Exilis Elite) or microcurrent (CACI) based treatments may offer some degree of subtle benefit in terms of improving skin quality under the eyes.

**If you experience any problems or have concerns following surgery, please do not hesitate to call our direct patient line for assistance on 07908 891059.**

## Results

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## Patient Pre & Post-Operative Care Guide

### Pre-Operative Preparations

#### *2 weeks before surgery-*

We would recommend that you start taking Arnica anti-bruising tablets, three times a day, two weeks prior to and two weeks after surgery. These are available from several health and wellbeing stores, including Holland & Barratt.

#### *1 week before surgery-*

Avoid Aspirin, Ibuprofen, Nurofen and other similar painkillers one week before and two weeks after surgery. Paracetamol is the safest painkiller to take, if necessary.

Stop taking Vitamin E and its compounds (such as evening primrose oil, fish oils, garlic and garlic capsules) 1 week before surgery and 2 weeks after surgery. Taking Vitamin E in any form can cause bleeding and post-operative complications.

#### *Day of surgery-*

**You must take your routine medicines at the usual time, unless advised otherwise and bring them with you (including inhalers).**

**Remove lenses prior to arrival at the clinic.**

**You will be discharged from the clinic with steristrips in place under your eyes. If you think that you may feel self-conscious about this, we recommend that you bring sunglasses.**

### Post-Operative Instructions

#### *Average length of stay-*

The surgery will be performed as a day case under a local anaesthetic unless your Surgeon advised otherwise during consultation. **Patients should not drive for a minimum of 24 hours post-operatively, so alternative means of transport should be arranged.**

#### *0-2 weeks after surgery*

- It is essential to ensure activity is kept to a minimum and to rest as much as possible. The less you do, the less you will bruise
- Shower if you wish and feel free to wash your hair, but please keep the steristrips as dry as possible
- Keep your head up to reduce swelling and sleep with extra pillows to raise your head
- To minimise bruising, avoid bending down, hot baths, heavy lifting and anything else that would naturally cause your face to redden
- Paracetamol can be taken as required

#### *2 days after surgery onwards*

- Gentle walks are permitted
- Driving may resume

#### *10 days after surgery onwards*

- Once sutures have been removed, use of a light, eye-specific moisturiser is recommended. Use a small amount, applied with the ring finger over the top and lower lids, working from the nose aspect to the ear
- Mascara can be worn

#### *3 weeks after surgery onwards (lower pinch blepharoplasty patients)*

#### *6 weeks after surgery onwards (lower blepharoplasty with fat redrape patients)*

- Moderate cardiovascular exercise may resume but do listen to your body- it will tell you if you are overdoing things. Deeper level healing will continue for several weeks and overdoing thing may lead to secondary bruising
- Eye makeup can be worn

#### *6 weeks after surgery onwards*

- Eyelash and eyebrow treatments are permitted

#### *6-12 weeks after surgery onwards*

- Swimming and more strenuous exercise may resume, as advised by your surgeon at your follow up appointment

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