

Blepharoplasty

Cosmetic eyelid surgery has gained popularity by giving the face a more youthful look through improvement of wrinkled and saggy eyelid skin.

Early signs of the normal aging process include downward shifting of the brows, upper eyelid fullness, and wrinkling skin. Initially, swelling of the upper eyelids presents only in the morning and diminish by the end of the day. Allergies, systemic problems, anatomical characteristics, or genetic origins may produce repeated swelling that lead to earlier aging changes in the upper eyelids. However, the swelling progressively gets worse and does not disappear. Eventually eye shadow becomes smudged at the lid folds. Progressive upper eyelid fullness produces overhanging skin folds that result in partial visual obstruction. To maintain proper function, each and every wrinkle of the skin around the upper eyelid cannot be removed. Also, a downward shift of the eyebrows is sometimes interpreted as a problem with the upper eyelids. Surgical correction of the brows is recommended before or at the same time as the upper eyelids. Together it will produce the most optimum result. Discoloration or “dark circles” beneath the eyes is not correctable by surgery. Chemical peels or laser resurfacing is the recommended treatment for improvement.

Lower eyelid puffiness or “bagginess” is caused by the protrusion of fatty tissues under the lids. It is sometimes noticeable at a relatively young age during the mid twenties. More often it is developmental in nature and appears at thirty five to forty years old, becoming more noticeable in the forties or fifties.

Developments in surgical methods have produced highly successful results with early treatment. Delaying treatment to the point of visual impairment or over-stretching muscle fibers causes a difficult repair and a limited result. The aging process may produce more wrinkling or fullness of the skin, but once fat bags are removed they generally do not return.

Procedure

The procedure may be performed in the office or an outpatient ambulatory surgery setting.

Anesthesia

The types of anesthesia are local, IV sedation, or general. The procedure itself should not be painful.

Surgical Time

Approximately 2 hours.

Surgical Procedure

The incisions, for reducing the wrinkles of the upper eyelids, are made horizontally through the lid. A segment of skin and sometimes the portion of fat underneath the lid are removed. The incisions, for the lower eyelids, are made behind the eyelid leaving no visible scar. Occasionally, a small skin excision below the lower eyelid

is made to remove the excess skin. The alternatives to improve wrinkles and tighten skin are chemical peels or laser resurfacing.

Postoperative Care

The following is a general idea of what to expect, instructions, and restrictions during the postoperative period. Specific instructions will be given at your preoperative appointment.

Cool compresses, applied to the eyelids for several days, are soothing and decrease swelling. Antibiotic ointment is applied to prevent infection. Dark glasses prevent irritation from sun and wind. Sunglasses also aid in resting the eyes and hide bruising. Patients should remain within traveling distance of the surgeon's office for approximately 10 days. Sutures are dissolvable and tape may be applied to the incision for reinforcement. Slight oozing from the eye is expected for three to four days.

Discoloration

The eyelids will be discolored and swollen for a period of time following the surgery. The length of time is dependent upon the type of skin and healing ability of the patient. Occasionally the white portion of the eye may be "bloodshot", this is temporary.

Scars

The scars are permanent. However, they are placed in such a position that they are barely visible after a reasonable period of time.

Complications

Any surgical procedures may result in complications, but fortunately with this procedure they are very rare. Complications include reaction to medicines (ex: nausea or allergic reaction), infections, healing abnormalities (ex: heavy scar formation), prolonged postoperative swelling, and discoloration. Rarely, swelling can cause a slight turning out of the lower lid, but this is usually temporary.

Changes in vision have been reported, but extremely rare. It is possible that eyelids will not be perfectly symmetrical. In fact, the majority of the population has slight asymmetry in their facial features.

Makeup

Eyelid makeup may be applied 1- 2 weeks following surgery.

Showers and Baths

No restrictions.

Social Activities

Social activities should be limited for 2 weeks.