



Care after blepharoplasty surgery (eyelid reduction)

Part 3 of 3

This leaflet explains what to expect after an eyelid reduction. **It is important that you read this information carefully and completely. Please initial each page** to show that you have read it. For information on the surgery, and the risks and complications of an eyelid reduction, please see parts 1 and 2.

What to expect after the operation

Eyelid reductions for the lower lid, or the lower and upper lids, are usually carried out under a general anaesthetic (so you would be asleep), or a local anaesthetic and sedation (where the whole area is numbed with injections and you are awake but sedated to keep you calm). Eyelid reductions for the upper lid only are usually carried out under local anaesthetic. The operation usually takes one or two hours.

You might be given antibiotics to keep the wound clean.

You might go home the same day, or stay in hospital overnight. If you do go home on the same day, a responsible adult should stay with you for the night. Simple painkillers should be enough to keep you comfortable.

After the surgery you should not drive or use machinery for at least 24 hours, until you have recovered feeling, movement and co-ordination.

It is common to have watery eyes after an eyelid reduction, partly because of swelling under the conjunctiva (the membrane that covers the front of the eye and lines the inside of the eye socket) and partly because the tear ducts are swollen and do not drain properly. This will last a few weeks. Your surgeon will give you eye drops to help to ease the feeling of grittiness.

After surgery, the eyelids might look and feel tight when closed because of the swelling and because skin has been removed. If you cannot completely close your eyes at night you should apply some eye ointment before going to sleep. This tightness will ease as the swelling goes down.

Page 1 of 3

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Dressings

The surgeon may apply some suture strips to support the eyelids. If these become crusted they can be replaced. Cleaning the eyes with water is useful, and the surgeon may advise you to use eye drops or ointment.

Sleeping propped up will help reduce swelling and will help you stay on your back. Using cold compresses on your eyelids for one or two days can also help to reduce bruising and swelling. Do not put ice directly onto your skin.

Stitches

The stitches are usually removed after three to five days, and you will be able to use make-up soon after. You may be advised to use the suture strips to support the lower eyelids for a week or so.

Recovery

You will be out of bed on the same day as your surgery. You may have a little bleeding from your eyelids for the first day or two after your operation. Dab this away gently with gauze squares or a clean handkerchief. Activities that increase the blood flow in your face (for example, bending over, straining, lifting or taking a hot bath) may increase the chance of bleeding, so avoid these for the first week.

Sleep with extra pillows to keep your head raised and be gentle with your eyelids for at least another month. You can gently clean your eyes with wet gauze.

You will be able to do light activities after one or two weeks. Most patients take at least two weeks off work after the operation, depending on their job.

Do not lift heavy things for several weeks, and avoid sex for at least two weeks. With all activities, start gently.

Do not drive until you feel safe and are comfortable wearing a seatbelt. Check your insurance documents if you are not sure.

Seeing the results

At first your eye skin may seem too tight and swollen, and you will have some bruising, which can be disguised with make-up and dark glasses. It can take a few weeks for the swelling to settle, and many months for the final result to appear.

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The scars will be pink for a few months, but eventually they become almost invisible. The scars may also become tight after a few weeks, but this normally settles after four to six months. Most patients are pleased with the final result, but some find their new shape difficult to get used to. This may happen to you.

Your aftercare

To protect your body, and get the best result, look after yourself.

Avoid vigorous activities after your operation.

Protect your wounds as you are told to.

Putting on weight will affect the results. Maintain a healthy weight and level of exercise.

What to look out for

Bleeding after surgery can cause swelling, a change in colour, and pain, usually just on one side. If the bleeding is inside the eye socket it can cause headaches and affect vision. If this happens, go straight to your nearest A&E department.

The signs of an infection are pain, redness, swelling and pus in the wound, and you may also have a temperature.

A blood clot in the leg can cause swelling and pain in the calf. If the clot goes to the lung, you might be breathless or have pain in your chest.

If the wound is not healing well, it may be sore and weep.

If you have any worries after your operation, speak to a doctor or go to A&E.

Important contact details for your surgery

Disclaimer

This document is designed to give you useful information. It is not advice on your specific needs and circumstances. It does not replace the need for you to have a thorough consultation, so you should get advice from a suitably qualified medical practitioner. We – The BAAPS and BAPRAS – have no liability for any decision you make about the surgery you decide to have.

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Page 3 of 3

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