

OTTAWA CARLETON EYE CARE CENTRE

DR. KEVIN SMITH CATARACT AND OCULOPLASTIC SURGEON

BLEPHAROPLASTY

Blepharoplasty is one of the most frequently performed plastic surgical procedures.

As an oculoplastic surgeon, Dr. Smith concentrates solely on eyelid surgery, thus gaining a particular expertise in this area.

Upper eyelid blepharoplasty is used to improve two common problem areas: excess skin or 'hooding' of the upper eyelid, and/or puffiness in the inner corner and middle of the upper eyelid caused by herniation (pushing forward) of fat. Heredity and sun damage can accelerate these changes.

Lower eyelid blepharoplasty is used to correct puffiness from fat herniation and also addresses excess skin.

If you are considering upper or lower eyelid surgery, the following information will provide you with a good introduction to these procedures.

ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS:

What are some of the most common benefits of this surgery?

Eyelid blepharoplasty can make a remarkable difference in the appearance of your face, alleviating the appearance of tiredness and old age. Your eyes appear fresher and more youthful, and these results may last for many years. The degree of improvement varies from patient to patient.

What will happen at the initial consultation?

During the consultation your surgeon will discuss the degree of change you would notice in your appearance. The procedure itself, and its risks and limitations will all be explained to you. Your medical history will be reviewed, and then he will examine the skin and fat around your eyes. Your eyesight, peripheral vision, and tear ducts might be checked if necessary.

How is eyelid blepharoplasty performed?

The surgery is performed under local anesthesia. For upper eyelid surgery, the incision is made in the natural skin fold. Excess skin and fatty tissue is removed, the

muscles and orbital septum (a thin connective tissue membrane) may be tightened, and the incisions are carefully sutured closed. The external incisions are hidden within the natural fold of the upper eyelids. For lower eyelid blepharoplasty the incision is made from the underside of the lid or close to the eyelash line. Excess fatty tissue and/or skin is removed. The skin is closed with very fine sutures. After either procedure the doctor will remove the sutures in approximately 5-7 days. A prescription for a steroid cream will be supplied to you at that visit to be used as directed.

How long does the surgery take?

Upper or lower eyelid blepharoplasty generally takes about one hour to complete, depending on the extent of the repair.

How much pain is there?

Initially, you may feel a tight sensation around the eyes, with minor discomfort that lasts for a day or two. A mild pain reliever can be taken as needed. People who have had the procedure are often surprised at how painless eyelid surgery can be.

What can I expect after surgery?

You will be given an instruction sheet to take home with you, which will outline the steps you should take to care for your eyelids after the surgery. The first evening after surgery, you should rest quietly with your head elevated. Cold compresses are to be used as per the instruction sheet provided.

What is the recovery period like?

At first the incisions will probably be red and somewhat bumpy. Eventually, the resulting scar should become flat and inconspicuous. The swelling and discoloration around your eyes will gradually subside, and you will start to look and feel better each day. Swelling and bruising varies considerably from person to person. Bruising typically disappears within 7-10 days. After the first week you will be permitted to use makeup, if desired, to conceal any discoloration. Your vision might be blurry for a few days. Your eyes may be temporarily sensitive to light, and you may experience excess tearing or dryness. You need to avoid wearing contact lenses for the first week. You might also consider wearing dark sunglasses for a couple of weeks to protect your eyes from wind and sun irritation. The eyes may tire easily for several weeks.

What is the long-term outcome like for most people?

The more alert, youthful look that this surgery provides is usually long-lasting. Thin scars may remain slightly pink for six months or so, but can easily be concealed with

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makeup. They eventually fade to a thin, nearly invisible white line. The removal of fat is permanent, but the looseness of skin and fine wrinkling of the eyelid area may return in the future. Even though the aging process continues, patients are usually happy with their appearance for many years following eyelid surgery.

RISKS

Significant complications from upper or lower eyelid surgery are infrequent. As with any surgical procedure, however, there is always a possibility of infection, or reaction to the anesthesia.

OTHER POTENTIAL COMPLICATIONS INCLUDE:

Temporary problems such as excessive tearing, decreased sensation in the eyelid, dryness, burning, stinging, and gritty sensation of the eye(s) are helped with eye drops and time. Prominence or firmness of the scars, asymmetry in healing or scarring, milia or whiteheads where the sutures emanate from the skin, and difficulty closing the eyes completely are corrected with minor surgery. Bleeding behind the eye is extremely rare but could cause visual loss. This presents as severe prolonged pain after surgery and should be dealt with immediately.

You can help minimize certain risks by following the advice and instructions of your surgeon, both before and after your eyelid surgery. Pre-existing conditions can also put you at risk, including thyroid problems, insufficient tear production or dryness of the eye, elevated blood pressure, circulatory disorders, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. If you have any of these conditions, discuss this with your surgeon before proceedings with this procedure.