



SAINT JAMES
HOSPITAL

Blepharoplasty – Patient Information

Blepharoplasty (eyelid surgery) is cosmetic surgery to remove excess skin or fat from the eyelids. The aim is to improve hooded or drooping eyelids or eye bags.

What does a Blepharoplasty involve?

A blepharoplasty can be done under local anaesthetic, with sedation or under general anaesthetic.

The surgeon will need to know if you are taking any medication that thin the blood such as aspirin, clopidogrel, warfarin or rivaroxaban or medicines that reduce your immunity or ability to heal.

Surgery on the upper eyelids generally involves:

- Making a cut (incision) along the eyelid crease in the natural skin fold of the eyelid
- Removing excess skin, fat or muscle
- Closing the incision – the scar will usually be hidden in the natural fold of the eyelid

Surgery on the lower eyelids generally involves:

- Making an incision either just below the lower eyelashes or on the inside of the lower eyelid
- Repositioning or removing fat from the bags under the eyes, and sometimes also a small amount of skin
- Supporting the muscles and tendon of the eyelid if necessary
- Closing the incision

The surgeon will usually apply thin, sticky strips called suture strips to support the eyelids after surgery. These are usually removed up to 1 week later.

An upper blepharoplasty may take about 1 hour. Surgery on the lower lid may take up to 2 hours. Most patients can go home the same day.

What can I expect after a Blepharoplasty?

It's advisable to take about 1 week off work to recover from eyelid surgery or as advised by your surgeon.

It may be obvious for a little longer than a week that you've just had eyelid surgery.

You will not be able to drive for a number of days after the operation. Bruises, scarring and redness may take several weeks to fade.

You might need to:

- Prop your head up with pillows for a couple of days, when resting, to reduce swelling
- Gently clean your eyelids using prescribed ointment or eyedrops
- Hold a cold pack to your eye for a few days – try a packet of frozen peas wrapped in a tea towel
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun and wind
- Take paracetamol or another prescribed painkiller to relieve any mild pain

You should avoid:

- Strenuous activity and swimming for a few days
- Smoking, as smoke can irritate your eyes
- Wearing contact lenses or rubbing your eyes



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What can I expect after a Blepharoplasty?

It's common after eyelid surgery to temporarily have:

- Puffy, numb eyelids that are difficult to close at night
- Irritated, sensitive or watery eyes – this may last a few weeks
- Bruising that looks like a black eye
- Scars – these eventually fade to almost be invisible

What can happen after a Blepharoplasty?

Eyelid surgery can occasionally result in:

- Temporary blurred or double vision
- Your eyes looking slightly uneven (asymmetrical)
- A pool of blood collecting under the skin (haematoma) – this usually disappears on its own after a few weeks
- Noticeable scarring

Rarely, lower blepharoplasties may result in more serious issues:

- Injury to eye muscles
- The lower eyelid drooping away from the eye and turning outwards (ectropion)
- The lower eyelid becoming pulled down and showing the white of the eye below the iris (eyelid retraction)
- Visual impairment – though this is extremely rare and many people find that their vision improves in the long term

Also, any type of operation carries a small risk of:

- Excessive bleeding
- Developing a blood clot in a vein
- Infection
- An allergic reaction to the anaesthetic

The surgeon should explain how likely these risks and complications are, and how they would be treated if they happen.

Smoking and Surgical Risks

Smoking increases the risk of complications both during and after cosmetic surgery.

Chemicals in cigarettes restrict blood vessels and reduce the amount of oxygen carried in your blood. This can affect your safety during the operation and your healing afterwards.

Risks During Surgery

Smoking can lead to:

- Reduced oxygen delivery to tissues, making the procedure riskier
- Higher risk of anaesthetic complications, including breathing difficulties
- Poor blood flow, which can affect the body's ability to tolerate the surgery
- Increased risk of skin and tissue damage during procedures that rely on good circulation

Risks After Surgery



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Smoking also significantly increases the risk of:

- Delayed wound healing
- Infection at the surgical site
- Poor scarring or widened scars
- Skin or tissue loss (necrosis), especially in procedures involving skin flaps

To reduce these risks, patients are strongly **advised to stop smoking (including e-cigarettes and nicotine-containing products) for at least 6 weeks before and after surgery.** Quitting allows your circulation and oxygen levels to improve, supporting safer surgery and better healing.

What if I have concerns?

You should contact the ER or the ward, as instructed prior to discharge if you have severe pain or unexpected symptoms.

Cosmetic surgery results may not always meet your expectations. If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you can discuss this with your surgeon.