

Eyelid Surgery



This leaflet gives you information on what to expect with your upcoming surgery. Before you have the operation, you will need to sign a consent form and so it is important that you understand this leaflet before you have surgery. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask your surgeon at any point during your care.

Eyelid Surgery

There are many different kinds of eyelid surgery, depending on your specific type of problem that requires attention. One person's operation is naturally different to another's (even if dealing with the same problem), so please do not assume that you will undergo the same procedure as a friend, even if, for example, you both have a watery eye. Eyelid surgery is usually carried out under a local anaesthetic. With a local anaesthetic you will be awake during the operation and you may feel sensations in the area being operated, but you should feel nothing sharp or painful during the surgery itself (although the anaesthetic can sting initially). You may be able to see some of what is happening, and you will be aware of the very bright operating theatre lights. In some cases, you will be asked to open your eyes or look up/down for brief periods, but otherwise feel free to keep your eyes closed unless otherwise directed, which will probably leave you most comfortable.

Anticoagulants

If you take a blood thinner (anticoagulant) and this was not discussed at your consultation, you should contact a member of staff prior to your operation going ahead. We will then advise you how to proceed. If you take non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g. ibuprofen, voltarol, etc.), it is preferable to avoid these prior to surgery, however, these are often necessary for other ailments and should not be stopped if you would otherwise be in pain.

Pre-operative Instructions

Please dress casually and comfortably. Avoid wearing jewellery and thoroughly clean your face prior to your surgery. Please remove make-up or contact lenses on the day of surgery. Please take your standard oral medication (except as previously re: aspirin, warfarin, clopidogrel, ibuprofen etc) on the morning of surgery.

Following Surgery

After surgery, you can experience some swelling/bruising for 1-2 weeks. Typically the swelling is at its worst after about 48 hours, so please do not be alarmed if bruising worsens the day after surgery; this is normal and in some cases the discolouration spreads down your face from your cheeks to your chin. If so, it will soon fade.

- You may still have a little oozing or bleeding from the site of surgery over the first few hours, which should resolve by itself. Following surgery, a firm dressing is applied to the surgical site until the following morning, typically secured with elastoplast tape, in order to reduce the swelling/bruising. In patients undergoing surgery on both left and right eyelids, both eyes are padded closed, for around an hour after surgery.
- If the patch becomes loose, apply more tape. Do not remove the patch. While the patch is on, do not get it wet. Shower from the neck down or take a bath.

Following Surgery (continued...)

- Cool packs applied to the wound are very helpful at reducing the swelling and bruising. If you wish to, apply a cool pack (e.g. a cold flannel) to the area for 10- 15 minutes, 3 times per day for the first 2 days.
- As the local anaesthetic wears off, you will experience tightness of the eyelids. Pain after surgery is typically minimal, however, if you experience significant discomfort please take mild pain relief as required (e.g. paracetamol). Paracetamol taken regularly works better than when taken occasionally.
- Avoid strenuous exercise, bending or heavy lifting for a few days after surgery as this can precipitate bleeding. Sleep with 2-3 pillows in order to keep the head elevated - this will help to reduce swelling / bruising.
- Antibiotic ointment should be applied to the wound twice daily, which prevents scab formation and may reduce the risk of infection. Wash hands thoroughly prior to applying ointment.
- If crusting occurs (dried tears/mucous around the surgical site), you may clean the wound with warm boiled water using cotton wool or cotton buds to remove crusts and pat (do not rub) dry. Do not use soap. Then apply a layer of antibiotic ointment. Be mindful not to remove anything that resembles dried blood as removal of a scab can sometimes promote scarring.
- You may shower and wash your hair, but try and avoid getting soap on the wounds. Dab them dry afterwards and apply ointment.

Stitches/sutures

Skin stitches typically need to be removed, although in certain cases I will use dissolvable stitches. If stitches are to be removed, I typically remove these 5- 10 days following surgery at your follow-up appointment.

Healing

Healing is a gradual process and the scars may remain pink for up to 3 months, after which time it may become pale. The area around the wound may be numb for several weeks or even months. You may experience occasional sharp pain or itching of the wound; this is normal during healing. If a skin graft is used, the initial appearance of the graft will be very different to the final appearance, which may take many months to achieve. Skin grafts are initially very fragile and their success is dependant on no rubbing or mechanical agitation to the tissue as the graft establishes a blood supply and takes.