

Having surgery to remove excess skin on your upper eyelid

Department of Ophthalmology

Information for Patients

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What is dermatochalasis?

Dermatochalasis is the name used to describe excess skin of the eyelid, also known as 'hooding'. This is not usually a cause for concern, however it can affect your vision if the extra fold of skin covers part of your eye. It often affects the upper eyelid more than the lower one.

What causes dermatochalasis?

Dermatochalasis is caused by the skin losing its elasticity, and is usually due to ageing. It can be caused by some medical conditions such as thyroid eye disease or regular episodes of swelling, or slipping of the fat around the eye (prolapse of orbital fat), causing the eyelid to bulge (eye bags).



What is the treatment for dermatochalasis?

Blepharoplasty is an operation which takes away the extra skin from the upper lids. The NHS only carries out this operation if the excess skin is affecting your vision or making your eyelids heavy and difficult to open.

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What does the blepharoplasty operation involve?

The procedure usually happens as a day case surgery with a local anaesthetic. You should plan to spend 4 to 6 hours in the hospital on the day of surgery.

The surgeon will measure and use a pen to highlight the skin to be removed. The pen mark will wash off later. You will lie on a couch in the operating room, and anaesthetic is injected under the skin of the eyelid. This will feel like a sharp sting for about 10 seconds; after this your eyelid will feel numb and you will not feel any pain during surgery.

An antiseptic iodine solution is used to clean the face, and sterile drapes will be used around your face and body. The excess skin is cut away with a surgical blade and the wounds are closed with stitches (sutures) that dissolve. Sometimes the surgeon may prefer to use an electrosurgical pencil (monopolar) instead of a surgical blade. This causes less bleeding during surgery, however it can be louder and there may be a burning smell. The outcome of the surgery is the same.

What happens after the operation?

Your face will be cleaned and the sterile drapes removed. An ointment is applied to each eyelid over the stitches. You will be given drops/ ointment to use for a few weeks after the operation.

You should not drive on the day of the operation.

The stitches will dissolve and fall out over the next few weeks.

Do not worry if there is some blood on the eyelids or around the wound. You will be advised to gently clean the eyelids with boiled cooled water.

The eyes will feel sore as the anaesthetic wears off, and the discomfort will normally settle in 1 or 2 days. The eyelids will appear bruised and swollen for up to 3 months after the operation.

The scar is usually hidden within the natural crease of the eyelid.

You will have a follow-up appointment with the surgical team. This is normally 2 to 3 weeks after your surgery.

What are the side effects or risks of blepharoplasty?

There is no absolute guarantee of success with any operation and blepharoplasty is no different. The following are possible complications of blepharoplasty surgery:

- Bruising and swelling of the eyelids (common) which can last up to 3 months after a successful operation.
- Scarring (usually hidden in the skin fold of the eyelid).
- Dry, gritty eyes for a few weeks.
- Rarely, infection can occur after the operation where the eyelid becomes red, swollen and tender. If this happens, you must contact the hospital.
- The shape of the eyelid may look different to the other eye.
- Very rarely, too much skin is removed and this may cause problems with closing of lids and blinking.
- As with all eye surgery, excessive bleeding is a rare risk, which can lead to loss of vision.

Contact details

- Oculoplastic Specialist Nurse: 0116 204 7971 (Monday to Friday - 8am to 5pm)
- Eye Casualty Department: 0116 258 6273 (for advice Monday to Friday - 8.30am to 4.30pm, Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays - 8.30am to 12.30pm)

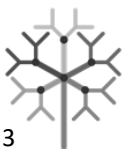
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