

Having a harmless lump removed from your eyelid

Ophthalmology

Information for Patients

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Introduction

Harmless lumps, bumps or lesions are usually known as 'benign'. This includes things like moles, cysts or skin tags, which are mostly harmless. The procedure for removing them is sometimes known as a 'biopsy'.

Why does my lesion need to be removed?

Although most lump or cysts (lesions) do not cause problems, you may want to have them removed if they get in the way, or in order to have them tested (diagnostic purposes). Surgery is recommended to remove skin lesions that show any signs of turning into cancer.

What symptoms can benign eyelid lesions cause?

- **Irritation:** benign eyelid lesions can cause a feeling of irritation around the eye.
- **Pressure:** blocked glands can cause a feeling of pressure. This is due to the build up of fluid in the cyst.
- **Visual symptoms:** large lesions or lesions that hang over the edge of the eyelid (such as skin tags) can get in the way of our vision. Some lesions can also put slight pressure on the eye ball. This can cause it to change shape (astigmatism). This can temporarily reduce your vision.
- **Uncertainty and anxiety:** sometimes it can be impossible to know if a lesion is harmless (benign) or cancerous (malignant). A laboratory test of the lesion after some of it has been removed (histopathological examination) can find out exactly what it is. If the lesion is malignant (cancerous), a more extensive excision can be planned to remove the whole lesion.

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- **Cosmetic:** benign eyelid lesions can be unsightly. This is due to the fact the eyes and eyelids are highly visible parts of our body.

Do benign lesions need to be removed?

If a benign lesion is not causing any symptoms there is no need to remove it. It would only be removed if there is uncertainty about the diagnosis.

How are benign eyelid lesions removed?

- A clinic assessment of the lesion is done.
- Local anaesthetic eye drops are put into the eye. Local anaesthetic is injected into the skin around the lesion. This injection is **painful** for 30 seconds.
- The lesion is removed and sometimes a few small stitches are needed to close the area.
- You may have an eye patch and antibiotic cream to take home depending on the lesion and the surgery.
- Most lesions are sent for testing in the laboratory (histopathology) to be certain that they are harmless.

What type of biopsy can be done?

- A **shave biopsy** will remove the part of the lesion that is raised up (protruding). This leaves the skin relatively flat after the procedure.
- An **incisional biopsy** removes just part of the lesion. This is mostly for diagnostic purposes and a further procedure may be needed later.
- An **excisional biopsy** removes the whole lesion.

What kind of anaesthetic will I have?

This is usually a minor operation that takes place in an outpatient eye clinic with local anaesthetic. This means you will be awake during the operation. You will have an injection into your eyelid to numb the area beforehand. You will also be given eye drops to make you feel more comfortable.

What will the local anesthetic and procedure feel like?

- The area may feel swollen or tight.
- Local anaesthetics work by blocking the way nerves carry pain signals to the brain. As the local anaesthetic wears off you may find that you have a tingling or burning feeling. The length of time that the local anaesthetic takes to wear off depends on what type of anaesthetic

was used. It usually lasts for about 2 to 4 hours. During this period take care not to injure the numb area as you may not feel any damage.

- The local anaesthetic may also have contained adrenaline. Adrenaline makes the surrounding blood vessels smaller. The area may have look lighter in colour. As the anaesthetics wears off normal skin colour will come back.
- As the local anaesthetics wears off you may find it helpful to take other pain relief.

What are the risks of surgery?

- **Scarring:** surgeons aim to place all cuts in locations that are hidden by your natural skin creases and folds and to stitch (suture) them in such a way as to minimise scarring, but you may be left with a tiny scar line.
- **Infection** of the wound (less than 1 in every 100 people): this might need antibiotic treatment.
- **Bleeding:** significant bleeding is very rare (less than 1 in every 1000 people) but it is very common to have minor bleeding for a few hours or even 1 or 2 days afterwards particularly if you are taking blood thinning tablets.
- **The lesion may come back (recurrence):** most lesions do not come back after they have been removed. Sometimes benign ones do, particularly if they have not been completely removed.
- **Temporary blurred vision:** the swelling, excess tear production and antibiotic cream can all blur the vision a little.
- Permanent visual problems after eyelid surgery are extremely rare.

What to expect after the operation

- **Eye pad:** if you do have an eye pad, remove it about 6 hours after surgery or the next morning.
- **Swelling and bruising:** although removal of eyelid lesions is minor surgery, it can still cause swelling and bruising and even a 'black eye'. This may be reduced by applying a small ice pack to the area for up to 20 minutes at a time, 3 to 4 times a day for a few days after the surgery.
- **Pain:** this can usually be managed with paracetamol or ibuprofen.
- **Eye cream:** your surgeon may give you some antibiotic cream to use for up to 2 weeks after the operation.
- **Stitches (sutures):** we use dissolvable stitches to close the wound. You do not need to have them removed.

How to contact us

Oculoplastic Specialist Nurse:	0116 204 7971 Monday to Friday - 8am to 5pm
Eye Emergency 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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