

Care after Eyelid Surgery (Blepharoplasty)

This page contains answers to frequently asked questions regarding your care after eyelid surgery (blepharoplasty). This information will help you to remember the instructions given to you after surgery.

What will I see when I look into a mirror?

The incisions will be repaired with very fine sutures. You may be able to see the knots at either end of the eyelids. I normally use three fine black nylon sutures in each upper eyelid and these will be removed in four or five days. The eyelids will be a bit bruised, puffy and sometimes weeping a clear red to yellow fluid. This is normal. Your eyelids will be more swollen in the morning and gradually improve during the day. It takes several weeks for all the swelling to go away.

How will my eyes feel?

In general the eyelids will feel mildly painful and sometimes itchy. Your eyes may feel dry as the swelling from the surgery and the medications used during the surgery will make it difficult to close your eyes completely. For this reason I will have you use artificial tears to keep your eyes lubricated. I also recommend wearing wrap around sunglasses when you are in bright light as these will provide protection from both the light and air movement.

How long should I use ice packs?

I recommend that you use cold compresses/ice pads 20 minutes out of each hour for up to 24 hours after your surgery. This will help to minimize bruising.

When can I shower or take a bath?

You normally can bathe or shower 48 hours after your surgery using a mild fragrance free soap such as Ivory or Dove. Avoid using very hot water. Avoid allowing water to run directly over your eyelids. Pat your eyelids dry and apply a thin layer of the ointment that will be provided to you after the surgery.

When can I wear eye make-up?

In general, you should be able to use hypoallergenic eye make-up two weeks after your surgery.

When can I put in my contact lenses?

In general, you should be able to put in soft lenses four to seven days after your surgery. Use of hard contact lenses normally requires more recovery time before you are comfortable wearing them so plan on seven to ten days after your procedure.

What can I do after surgery?

You should “take it easy” for several days following the surgery and gradually increase your activity as you feel more comfortable. Avoid heavy exercise also during this time and only gradually return to your normal routine. You can resume all of your normal activities about two to three weeks after surgery. Try to sleep on your back for two weeks using pillows to elevate your upper body.

When can I drive?

You generally should be able to drive about three to five days after surgery if you feel up to it. You should never drive if you are still taking any pain medication other than Tylenol.

When will I be able to return to work?

Depending on the type of work you do, you should be able to return to your job as soon as you are comfortable. If your job does not require heavy activity, you should be able to go back in two to seven days.

How much pain will I have?

The most discomfort that you will have lasts three to five days, sometimes a little longer. As you feel more comfortable, your need for medication will be less.

What medications should I use?

I will prescribe a pain medication, an antibiotic ointment, and sometimes a medication for nausea for you. Follow the directions on the bottle for their use. The pain medication will make you feel drowsy. Have someone assist you in your home and do not attempt to drive while you are taking the pain medication. A few days after surgery most patients will find that Tylenol will take care of the discomfort. Do not use aspirin for five days after the surgery. Apply the ointment to your eyelid incisions twice a day for 5 days. If you received a prescription for nausea medication take it as needed.

Can I drink alcohol?

Do not drink alcohol for five days after your surgery.

When will I be seen in the office after surgery?

You will normally be seen in the office within three to five days of your surgery and then at about two weeks, one month, three months, and six months after surgery to monitor healing. Additional appointments may be necessary and will be determined by your recovery.

How will I know if I am having a problem?

Urgent problems after eyelid surgery do not occur frequently. These are the complications that will require a change in your post-operative care:

Vision Problems

- If you experience any change in vision, “flashing lights”, loss of peripheral vision contact my office immediately

Hematoma (blood collecting under your eyelids) can occur within hours of your surgery. The warning signs are:

- Severe pain that does not respond to medication
- Significant swelling of an eyelid
- Excessive or growing bruising an eyelid

Infection is rare following eyelid surgery. It is normal to have a very small amount of drainage from your incisions for one to two days. Signs of infection are:

- Increased temperature
- Increasing drainage from the incisions
- Increasing redness around the incisions

Leg swelling with or without associated pain may indicate a problem with the vein circulation in your leg(s). Although some swelling is to be expected due to your surgery, intravenous fluids given to you during the surgery and your decreased level of activity, this swelling is normally mild, painless and affects both legs evenly. If you have a large amount of leg swelling (either one or both legs) or if you experience pain in your legs contact the office immediately.

Breathing problems after eyelid surgery are rare but can be a serious complication. If you develop any chest and/or back pain or the feeling of being short of breath you must contact my office or be seen in the nearest emergency medical facility without delay.

Medication reactions may occur with the drugs prescribed for you. If you develop a skin rash, itching, vomiting, or diarrhea, stop taking your medication and contact my office.

If you have any of the above problems or other questions, contact my office.