

# Bleph Information Sheet

## Are you thinking about Eyelid Surgery?

If you are considering surgery of your upper or lower eyelids, or both, Dr. Peterson wants you to be thoroughly informed about these procedures. Reading this brochure is the first step. However, a personal consultation with your surgeon is the best way to obtain the additional information you will need.

## About Eyelid Surgery

Cosmetic eyelid surgery is also known as blepharoplasty. The effects of sun damage and the natural ageing process can lead to loss of elasticity in the facial skin. This can cause sagging, particularly around the eyes and cheeks. The aim of blepharoplasty is to remove the drooping and wrinkled skin of the upper eyelids that can make you look tired or sad. Blepharoplasty can also eliminate bags under the eyes by removing excess fat and tighten the lower eyelid skin. The result is a younger, more alert and rested appearance. Cosmetic eyelid surgery can be performed on adults of any age.

## Is cosmetic Eyelid Surgery for me?

Any of the following conditions may make you a good candidate for eyelid surgery:

- A puffy appearance to the upper or lower eyelids.
- Excess skin obscuring the natural fold of the upper eyelids.
- Loose skin hanging from the upper eyelids over your eyelashes, perhaps impairing vision.
- Bags under the eyes often with a depression along the bony border of the lower eyelids.
- Excess skin and fine, crepey wrinkles of the lower eyelids.
- Droopiness of the lower eyelids, showing white below the iris ( the colour portion of the eye).

Cosmetic eyelid surgery can usually correct these problems, although other treatments may also need

to be considered. For example if the upper eyelid condition is accompanied by sagging of the eyebrows, a forehead lift may be recommended. Smoothing of crow's feet may require laser resurfacing, chemical peels, or other treatments. Circles beneath the eyes caused by dark pigmentation may be treated with cosmetic products to lighten the pigmentation. The Athena Clinic can provide further information if you have an interest in any of these additional procedures.

## Initial Consultation

During the initial consultation you will be asked to point out exactly what you would like to see improved. This will help Dr. Peterson understand your expectations and determine whether they can be realistically achieved.

You will be asked about your medical history including previous operations, past and present medical conditions and medications. In order to provide you with the best information and safest options, it is important that you provide your complete information.

Photographs may be taken during your initial consultation and at subsequent visits for the purpose of preoperative planning and documentation. These are only kept in charts for office use. We will discuss with you the details of the operation and the possible risks and complications associated with the procedure.

## Your Operation

Because of individual factors, not everyone will achieve the same results from eyelid surgery. Dr. Peterson will select the surgical technique that he feels will obtain the best outcome for you. One of several surgical techniques may be suggested to improve the appearance of your eyelids. The particular technique that Dr. Peterson recommends will depend on many factors such as the amount of excess fat and skin in the eyelid areas, the position of your eyebrows, and the condition of the muscles around your eyes.

For **upper eyelid** surgery, generally an incision is hidden within the natural fold of the upper eyelid and extends slightly beyond the outside corner into other existing creases. Through this incision, excess skin and fatty tissue are removed. Because the incision follows the natural contour of the upper eyelid, it will be well camouflaged when healed.

For **lower eyelid** surgery, often an incision is hidden just below the lower lashes. Through this incision, excess skin, muscle and fat are removed, or fat may be redistributed to eliminate puffiness or bulges. Other adjustments to correct special problems such as muscle laxity may be performed. As in upper eyelid surgery, the incision is well camouflaged by natural creases. In some cases, you and your surgeon may decide that the best approach for removing excess fat is through an incision placed inside the lower eyelid. This technique requires no external incision but it cannot be used to remove excess skin. A laser may sometimes be used in conjunction with this technique to minimize the laxity and wrinkles of your lower eyelid.

### **How long does the operation take?**

The operation takes 1 - 2 hours, depending on the extent of procedures being completed.

### **Preparation for Surgery**

The Athena Clinic would like to make your surgical experience as easy and comfortable for you as possible. Smokers will be asked to stop smoking before surgery. Aspirin, some anti-inflammatory medications, and some herbs cause increased bleeding, so you should avoid taking these medications for 2 weeks before surgery and 2 weeks after surgery.

You will have a preoperative visit in the office about two weeks prior to the date of surgery. You will be asked about your medical history including previous operations, past and present medical conditions and medications. In order to provide you with the best information and safest options, it is important that you provide complete information. You may be asked to obtain an EKG prior to your surgery or have medical clearance from your primary care physician before proceeding with the surgery.

At this visit, instructions will be explained about what to do before and after surgery. You will have an opportunity to ask questions about your surgery, sign consent forms, and complete necessary laboratory work.

The operation is performed on an out patient basis, allowing you to leave after the operation is finished and you have recovered sufficiently from the anaesthetic. You will need to arrange to have someone drive you home after surgery and to stay with you at least the first night following surgery.

### **The day of Surgery**

You will arrive at The Athena Clinic and be checked in for surgery. This process takes about one hour, Dr. Peterson will meet with you and answer any last minute questions. He will also make markings around your eyes with a marker and take more pictures. Commonly, blepharoplasty is done using local aesthetic. Oral medication for relaxation is available to you on the day of the procedure. If you are having IV sedation because of preference or because you are having multiple procedures, you will also meet your anaesthetist, who will review your medical history and discuss the anaesthesia with you. During the anaesthetic, various monitors are used to check your heart, blood pressure, pulse and the amount of oxygen circulating in your blood. Your anaesthesia during the procedure is administered and monitored by a certified registered nurse anaesthetist (CRNA) or an anaesthesiologist.

You will then go to our Joint Commission approved in-office operating suite. The surgical team will prepare you for the surgery by washing the surgical area. It can be cold in the operating room, however we will provide plenty of blankets and you may want to bring socks. The anaesthetist will begin the intravenous (IV) sedation and administer antibiotics intravenously to minimize the chance of infection. Dr. Peterson will then begin the surgery once you are comfortable.

### **After Surgery**

When surgery is completed you will be able to go home immediately if having only local aesthetic. If you have had IV sedation, you will be taken into the recovery room where you will continue to be closely monitored. You will spend about an hour in the

recovery room before going home. You will not be discharged to go home until you are no longer very drowsy.

You will have cold gauze placed on your eyes to minimize the swelling and discomfort. Your vision will be blurry as a result of ointment used to soothe and protect the eye during surgery as well as from the swelling that is normal after eyelid procedures. Once at home, you will be asked to apply cold gauze to your eyelids many times during the first 24 hours. You will also apply prescribed eye drops and prescribed eye ointment to your eyes for the first few days.

### **How will I look and feel initially?**

It is important to understand that recovery time can vary from one individual to the next.

The first evening after surgery you should rest quietly with your head elevated. Initially, you may feel a "tight" sensation around the eyes and some mild discomfort that can be controlled with oral prescribed pain medication. During the first 48 hours following surgery, patients experience varying degrees of swelling and bruising. Some patients find that mild swelling persists for several weeks, while others may see swelling resolve in as little as one week. Bruising typically disappears within 1-2 weeks. After a few days you may conceal discoloration with make up, while avoiding the incision sites. Stitches along the incisions are usually removed within a week of surgery.

Your vision may continue to be somewhat blurry for a few days or longer as the swelling dissipates. Your eyes may be temporarily sensitive to light, and you may experience excess tearing or dryness. You may want to wear dark glasses for a couple of weeks to protect your eyes from wind and sun irritation.

### **When can I resume my normal activities?**

Considerable bruising and swelling over the first week may be encountered. This can be expected to settle rapidly over the first week and will usually have completely resolved by the end of the second week. Generally speaking you will be confident and happy to engage in social contact by about the second week following surgery although this varies

with each patient, often times resuming social activities earlier.

Straining, bending and lifting should be avoided for 2 weeks after surgery. In many instances, however, you will be able to resume most of your normal activities in ten days or less. Although you might feel like going back to work just a few days after surgery, your vision may still be slightly blurry which could make reading or other paperwork more difficult. You should not wear contact lenses for two weeks and should not drive while your vision is blurry.

### **Results of your Eyelid Surgery**

Cosmetic eyelid surgery has the effect of making you look more rested, refreshed and alert. Since the healing process is gradual, you should expect to wait at least several weeks to get an accurate picture of the results of your eyelid surgery. Incisions will fade over a number of months until they become barely visible.

### **How long will the results last?**

The results of cosmetic eyelid surgery are long lasting, but they may be affected by your heredity and lifestyle.

Removal of fat from your eyelids, which is usually the cause of puffiness and bags, is permanent, and these conditions generally will not recur. The skin continues to age, however, and skin laxity along with fine wrinkling of the eyelid area may return at some point. Sometimes loss of tone in the forehead causes additional sagging of the eyebrows, which mimics a recurrence of drooping upper eyelids. If this happens, correction may require a forehead lift or a secondary eyelid procedure. Even though the ageing process continues, patients are usually happy with their appearance for many years following eyelid surgery. Some patients find that they want to make additional improvements at a later time.

### **Risks and possible complications of Surgery**

Fortunately, significant complications from cosmetic eyelid surgery are infrequent. Every year many thousands of operations are performed with limited problems and great results. However everyone considering surgery should be aware of both the

benefits and risks. The subject of risks and potential complications of surgery is best discussed on a personal level between you and Dr. Peterson.

- Bleeding from the operative site is uncommon, occurring in about 2-3% of cases. This may result in accumulation of blood under the skin that may require removal. It is most likely to occur immediately following surgery or that evening. High blood pressure, aspirin and bending and straining after surgery increase the risks of bleeding.
- Injury to the cornea (the clear lens at the front of the eye) is possible.
- Loss of vision is very uncommon but the most serious of the possible complications
- Infection following blepharoplasty is uncommon due to the superior healing qualities of the facial areas. If infection occurs it will may require treatment with antibiotics. In the unlikely event of infection, the ultimate result of the surgery may be adversely affected
- Swelling of the eyelids can affect contour for some months and during this period of settling, improvement in eyelid contour can be expected. It is likely that close scrutiny of your eyelids following the procedure may reveal some small irregularity in contour or symmetry.
- Double vision is usually temporary and is due to swelling and bruising around the eyes. It almost always improves within a week of surgery. Permanent double vision is exceedingly rare.
- Drooping of the upper eyelid again is uncommon, however, injury to the muscle that holds the eyelid up is possible.
- Scars: Incisions used for blepharoplasty are placed where they blend into the natural lines of the upper and lower lids. For the first few weeks the scars may be pink and slightly thickened. Scarring following surgery may take up to a year to fully mature and can be expected to be minimal and unnoticeable. However, while great care will be taken to give the neatest incision

closure possible, individual wound healing can be unpredictable and it is possible that you may be unhappy with some aspect of your incision lines. Although rare, hypertrophic scars (widened or thick) and keloid scars (overgrown) can occur in some cases. The scars may need to be revised.

- Tightness of the lower eyelid can occur in the early healing period resulting in widening of the eye or slight turning out of the eyelid (ectropion). This can be expected to have resolved by six weeks following surgery and can be helped by regular massage. Permanent ectropion of the lower eyelid can rarely occur. Entropion, where the eyelid is turned in, is less likely although can also rarely occur.
- There can be a feeling of dryness or irritation in the eye that requires treatment with eye drops.
- There is a possibility of a temporary decrease in sensation of the eyelid skin.

You can help to minimize certain risks by following the advice and instructions of your plastic surgeon, both before and after your eyelid surgery.

### **Maintaining a relationship with your Plastic Surgeon**

Should there be any questions regarding blepharoplasty be sure to voice your concerns to Dr. Peterson. Before proceeding with the operation, consider your options and feel comfortable with your decision.

After surgery, you will return to The Athena Clinic for follow-up care at prescribed intervals, at which time your progress can be evaluated. Once the immediate postoperative follow-up is complete, we encourage our patients to come back for periodic check-ups to observe and discuss the long-term results of surgery.

Please remember that the relationship with your plastic surgeon does not end when you leave the operating room. Post-operative and follow up visits are very important. If you have questions or concerns during your recovery, or any time, please contact us.