

EYELID SURGERY

APPROXIMATE COST:

Upper lids: \$2,700-\$3,500

Lower lids: \$2,700-\$3,500

There may be additional charges for surgical facilities and anesthesia. Be sure to request this information.

APPROXIMATE TIME UNTIL COMPLETELY HEALED: Five to eight weeks.

PRESURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- You will be given blood and lab tests approximately two weeks before surgery. Take no aspirin or aspirin-containing products for two weeks prior to your surgery and one week after (see list of medications to avoid). They can cause bleeding and bruising. You may take Tylenol.
- Avoid sunbathing the face for two weeks prior to surgery.
- If you take medication daily, notify your doctor. Also inform him if you develop an illness, cold or any skin infections about the face and neck within a week of your surgery.
- If you're a smoker, you should clearly understand that nicotine could impair and delay healing. Most offices will suggest quitting a week to ten days before surgery, and a week post-op. If it were me, I'd stop smoking a minimum of three weeks prior to surgery and not touch a cigarette for a full month post-op. Who needs to be left with scars worse than normal as well as other complications as a result of smoking through the pre- and post-surgical period?

THE DAY BEFORE SURGERY

- Do not eat or drink anything after midnight.
- The night before surgery, shower and shampoo your hair and cleanse your face.

THE DAY OF SURGERY

- You may rinse and brush your teeth, but *do not eat or drink anything*. Some offices may ask you to take pills with a small amount of water the day of surgery.
- Wear no makeup and remove contact lenses and dentures for surgery. *Do not put any moisturizer on your eyes or face.*

- Do not bring any jewelry or valuables. Wear a robe, housecoat or warmup suit that buttons or zips in the front, and wear flat shoes. *No tight fitting clothes.*
- *Someone must drive you home and stay with you the first night.*
- Postoperative instructions regarding activity, medications and office visits will be given to you following your surgery.

THE SURGERY

Upper eyelid surgery takes approximately one hour. Lower eyelid surgery also runs about an hour. Add an additional half-hour for preparation and anesthesia. There are normally four people in the operating room with you: the surgeon, the anesthesiologist, and two surgical nurses.

You will be given a general anesthetic intravenously. An I.V. antibiotic will also be administered.

UPPER EYELIDS

First, locations are marked for the incision line on the upper eyelid. This may be done while the patient is in a seated position to correspond to how you will see yourself in a standing position. (Marking the incision lines in a reclined posture would produce a different result.)

Excess skin is removed with special care to place the incision in the normal fold of the upper eyelid and also to avoid removing eyebrow skin. It's important that the incision allow at least 1.5 cm. between the fold of the eyelid and the eyebrow. Otherwise the eyelid won't blend into the brow and the end result would be very unacceptable.

After opening the eyelid skin and removing the excess, the muscle of the upper eyelid is opened, and the fat that tends to cause the bulging is removed. Most people are particularly aware of the fat in the middle corner of the eyelid. This is usually removed with an electric cautery, which coagulates the blood vessels and stops the bleeding. The wound is then closed with skin stitches.

LOWER EYELIDS

Most surgeons make an incision just under the lash margin to remove the excess fat and, to a minimal degree, the excess skin. The incision is then closed with stitches. It's becoming increasingly popular to remove the fat through an incision on the inside of the eyelid, leaving no scar on the face. However, this procedure must be combined with the incision just under the lashes if excess skin is to be removed.

POST SURGICAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Apply ice compresses to eyes almost constantly during the waking hours for the first 24 hours after surgery. Thereafter they may be used, as you need them to relieve itching or discomfort. Use four-by-four-inch gauze pads soaked in ice water and wrung out damp. *Do not put ice directly on skin. Do not use eye drops unless instructed to do so.*
2. Continue your antibiotics until your doctor instructs you to stop.
3. Swelling and discoloration are expected and will begin to subside about three days after surgery. You may take a stool softener if you are constipated.
4. For comfort, warm compresses may be used five days following surgery and thereafter.
5. Limit yourself to light activities for one week. Sleep with head elevated.
6. Avoid straining, vigorous exercise, or the head-down position, all of which may cause excessive pressure in the eyes and may encourage unnecessary swelling or bleeding.
7. Consider discomfort as an indication that you have been too active--rest and apply cold compresses. Only after that should you consider taking pain medication stronger than acetaminophen (Tylenol).
8. If you experience dryness or scratchiness of the eyes, use artificial tears such as HypoTears, Tears Naturale or Lacrilube. These may be used as much as you desire.
9. Wear sunglasses when exposed to the sun's rays to protect eyelids for four to six weeks.
10. You may wash your face and shampoo your hair. Thoroughly rinse after washing to remove any soap or shampoo residues.
11. Makeup may be used over intact skin, but do not apply it to wounds with sutures or to incision lines before 48 hours after suture removal.
12. Make an appointment to return for suture removal approximately five days after surgery.

THE RECOVERY PERIOD

You'll have two lovely shiners following your surgery, particularly if you've had the lower eyelids done too. The bruises are usually a deep purple color before turning brown, green, yellow and then fading to normal. The purple bruises under the eyes are always the most stubborn and can linger for up to four to five weeks post-op, and sometimes longer. The good news is that *they will eventually completely disappear*, and you can cover them with makeup (Dermablend, Prescriptives Camouflage Creme, Cover Mark, Natural Cover, or Clinique Continuous Coverage) until they're gone. Be sure that you don't apply any makeup to wounds with sutures. Medically, it's reasonably safe to apply some makeup to the incision lines 48 hours after suture removal, but I wouldn't advise using makeup around incision lines for a good week post-op unless it is absolutely necessary.

Almost all incision lines “raise up” and become quite pink before they flatten out; it's part of the normal healing process. The incision lines also tend to look lumpy before they flatten, and they can even develop small cysts that will easily be removed by your doctor.

You will experience a tight-eye sensation for a good three to four weeks. Don't worry--as your swelling begins to subside, the tight feeling will ease up and finally return to normal.

Heavy eye tearing can occur one to three weeks post-op. Also, don't be surprised if your vision seems soft and slightly out of focus for three to four weeks; the actual eyeball swells slightly as a result of the surgery in the area. Like everything else, it all normalizes with time.

Expect a slight clear mucous buildup around the lids following surgery. This occurs because the swelling has temporarily closed the tear duct. Artificial tears will help clear the eyes until the problem corrects itself.

You mustn't even attempt to wear contact lenses until you have your doctor's OK. The lenses won't fit a swollen eyeball, and they're impossible to remove if you put them in during the swollen period.

Any eye exercises should be done only at your doctor's request. This includes no reading for 48 hours. Television is okay after 24 hours.

PROBLEM SIGNS

Any type of serious pain should be reported to your doctor immediately. Any heavy oozing from incision lines or any excess pus should be considered abnormal and reported to your doctor. Bleeding in the area or an eye that's glued shut from excessive amounts of secreted matter are problems your doctor needs to know about as soon as the symptom occurs. Allergic symptoms such as excessive redness and itching are problems. You could be allergic to the Polysporin or other medication.

Once your doctor has told you that it's safe to apply eye makeup--usually 48 hours after suture removal--run a little cream foundation over the entire lid and undereye area. The bruises that are very purple and dark will bleed through the foundation appear to be a deep gray color. Take the smallest amount of Dermablend, Clinique Continuous Coverage, Prescriptives Camouflage Cream, Cover Mark or Natural Cover in your appropriate color, and lightly drug abuse it on right over the cream foundation. The instant the bruise is covered, *stop applying makeup*. It's important that any makeup you use match the color of the cream foundation you're using. If it's too pale, you'll end up looking ghoulish and pasty.

Once you've evened out your skin tone, you can apply your usual eye makeup. However, *do not* use eyelash curlers or eyelash tints until the end of the eighth week post-op. It's also a good idea to avoid the mauve, plum and blue tones of eye shadow color during your bruised period of recovery. These colors tend to make your bruising look worse even through camouflage makeup. Stay in the earth tones until your bruising has disappeared.