

Minor eyelid surgery

The Eye Unit Patient Information

This leaflet aims to inform patients who are considering minor eyelid surgery and can help by answering some common questions.

What are minor eyelid operations?

Your specialist will explain why treatment may help in your case. The commonest minor eyelid operations are for:

- **biopsy** - diagnostic testing of lumps
- removal of **benign lumps**
- **punctoplasty** - tear drainage tube opening enlargement

Why do I need an operation?

- **Biopsy** - Some eyelid lumps look unusual and the diagnosis is unclear. It is very important to take a sample for testing to ensure no skin cancer is present
- **Benign lumps** - There are certain eligibility criteria set by the NHS commissioners for removal of benign eyelid lumps. For example they must be causing significant symptoms or be affecting your vision
- **Punctoplasty** - Sometimes eye watering is simply due to narrowing of the tear drainage tube opening in your eyelid and enlarging this with a small operation may help.

What will happen during the procedure?

You **should not drive** to the hospital on the day of surgery. You will be asked to come to the hospital in good time so there may be a short wait. The surgery is done following a small numbing injection and normally takes less than 30 minutes. You may have ointment applied to the wound and an eye pad and you can go home on the same day.

When can I drive and go to work after the operation?

You may start driving and working again as soon as the dressing is removed as long as your vision is clear and you are not light sensitive, but avoid heavy lifting or dirty and dusty environments to reduce the risk of complications.

Are there any risks or side effects?

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Are there any risks?

This surgery is not essential for your health and the treatment being offered is optional. Most patients are pleased with the results of surgery and have no serious complications. If you choose to have surgery, serious, significant or frequently occurring risks are as follows:

- **common (up to 1 in 20)** - scarring, bruising, minor bleeding, swelling, dry eye, recurrence, discomfort, persistent symptoms, lid notch or loss of lashes - if lid margin involved
- **uncommon (up to 1 in 100)** - infection
- **rare (up to 1 in 1000)** - other e.g. lump
- **very rare (up to 1 in 10,000)** - hypertrophic or keloid scarring - only in susceptible individuals and very rarely seen on the eyelids
- **(1 in 100,000)** - reaction to anaesthetic, severe or permanent vision loss

What to expect after the operation

A dressing will be applied. Make sure the wound is kept clean and dry, if necessary clean it gently using cooled, boiled water and clean gauze or tissues. Use a separate gauze or tissue for each wipe to the area.

You will be prescribed an eye ointment, which you should apply to the wound as directed, usually twice a day for seven days.

Scarring is rarely significant. You may improve the scar appearance by massaging the area with antibiotic or lubricating ointment e.g. Vaseline.

You will experience some degree of swelling and bruising - cold compresses and elevation of the head will help to relieve any discomfort. Bruising may take three or four weeks to disappear completely, although it can usually be concealed with make-up after seven days.

It is important to avoid strenuous activity for the first week after surgery.

Do not swim for four weeks because of the risk of infection.

Avoid heavy lifting, running or strenuous gym work-outs for four weeks or you may exacerbate bruising or swelling.

You cannot wear contact lenses for at least two weeks after surgery, because the eyelids may be stiff and sore and your eyes may be dry.

Some people experience blurred vision or sensitivity to light for a few days. A dry eye problem may be worsened by the surgery, and more frequent eye drops required.

When should I contact the department?

- you have any problems with your vision
- your eye becomes red or painful
- you cannot close your eye properly
- you have bleeding from the wound or a sticky discharge

Any problems or questions?

For further information and advice please contact:

Eye Emergency Helpline: 0300 019 4181

Mon-Sat: **8am-6pm** Sunday: **8:30am-2pm**. Bank Holidays: **8.30am-6pm**.

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