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PRIVATHOSPITAL

Information on eyelid surgery

Who is eligible for eyelid surgery?

As we age the skin and the deeper layers in eyelids loses its elasticity. On the upper eyelids this shows itself as an increasing surplus of skin, in which the skin gradually erases the so-called “globe line” and lie down on the eyelashes. This is often worsened by the sagging of the forehead, which further contributes to the eyebrows sinking so the skin under the eyebrow is pushed down on the upper eyelids. Furthermore, the deep membranes which keep fat tissue inside the eye sockets looses its strenght. For some this means that the eyelids become very voluminous and heavy.

In lighter cases this causes aesthetic irritations of looking ”tired” or ”worn”. The eyelids may ”stick together” and for women this may complicate using eye makeup. As time passes this may cause irritation by causing tension across the forehead and headaches because of attempts to lift the eyelids and constantly straining the muscles in the forehead. In more severe cases this condition may cause physical irritation with shadow forming in the outer upper part of the field of vision.

On the lower eyelids, the deep changes cause a much more visible aging effect. Here, sagging of the deep membrane cause the fat tissue to bulge outwards and cause so called ”bags under the eyes”. The lack of resilience in skin causes a small surplus of skin as well as wrinkles. On some people this causes a so-called tear-through towards the nose, which results in a dark shade (darkness under the eyes). In old age the fat in the eye sockets diminishes, causing the eyes to sink deeper into the eye sockets.

What is the procedure of eyelid surgery?

Upper eyelid surgery

Surplus skin, muscles and fat tissue on the upper eyelid is removed through an incision. The incision must with some be extended into a smile-wrinkle to reduce the surplus of skin in that area. With others the operation should be supplemented with an eyebrow lift.

Lower eyelid surgery

Through an incision along the edge of the lower eyelid access to the deeper membranes and muscles is achieved. Hereafter, the area can be altered by either moving or removing fat tissue and tightening the muscles. Typically, either none or little of the skin is removed. The operation may be supplemented or in some cases, completely replaced by transferring fat tissue in which contours are evened.

Course: from pre-examination to final checkup

Pre-examination

On the first visit the plastic surgeon will evaluate your wishes together with you, in relation to possibilities and limitations. You should not wear eye makeup at the consultation. You will be informed about what is realistic to expect after the operation, what effects the operation has as well as which risks the operation entails. You are required to receive this information verbally as well as in text. In some cases, further examinations must be made by an eye doctor, a different specialist or with blood samples before it is deemed feasible to continue with an operation.

Before the pre-examination you will be given a schema concerning your general health, allergies, medicine and personal data, as well as a schema concerning consent to an operation and the hospital's communication with a third party.

At the pre-examination photos will be taken for later documentation of the completed treatment (before and after photos). All of this data is protected by the personal data law as well as our confidentiality. You will be given the information in text. If it is a case of a

cosmetic surgical procedure, in accordance with legislation, 7 days must pass before you are able to book an appointment. You have the right to be bring an assessor during the pre-examination if you wish to.

The operation

Upper eyelid surgery

Is done under local anesthesia and ambulant (you will return to your home shortly after observation).

You are to arrive shortly before the operation. The operational nurse will greet you and inform of the planned procedure. After the operation you must stay at the hospital for observation and treatment with cooling glasses. You should expect the entire procedure to take about 2 hours.

After the operation

You are recommended to wear the cooling glasses for 5 minutes every hour in the first 24 hours. The first nights you should lie with your head in a raised position. Both of these actions will reduce swelling.

You will not be presentable for the first week after the operation. There will be a thin thread from the stitches as well as small band-aids to fix the position of the thread. There may also be discoloring of both the upper and lower eyelid (black eye). After a week you must return to the hospital where the thread will be removed. The checkup of the result is done by your plastic surgeon about 3 months after the operation.

Lower eyelid surgery

Is typically done under full anesthesia (can be done with local anesthesia). The operation is a so called same-day procedure (short hospitalization). If you are to have full anesthesia you must fast for 6 hours before the operation, but you are allowed to drink water up until 2 hours before the operation. The operational nurse will greet you and get you set. After the operation you are transferred to the awakening ward where you are observed until you are

completely awake and ready. Most patients are able to go directly home after waking up, but a few are transferred to the hospital ward for further observation. Typically, you should expect the entire procedure to be about 5 hours.

After the operation

You are recommended to wear the cooling glasses for 5 minutes of ever hour in the first 24 hours. . The first nights you should lie with your head in a raised position. Both of these actions will reduce swelling.

You will be given an eye cream which you must use at night, and which can be used during the day if you feel it necessary because of the eyes drying out.

You will not be presentable for the first week after the operation. There will be a thin thread as well as a band-aid bandage on the lower eyelid. There may also be discoloring and swelling for up to 3 weeks after the operation.

After a week you must return to the hospital to have the thread removed. Checkup of the result will be with your plastic surgeon about 3 months after the operation. Upper and lower eyelid surgery can be done at the same time and in such cases always under full anesthesia. The procedure is as described in lower eyelid surgery.

Subsequent effects

Swelling

There may be swelling for up to months after having eyelid surgery. This is very individual and may be highly bothersome. With swelling in the lower eyelids there may be a so called “close defect”, so the eye is unable to close completely. This causes drying and requires treatment with eye drops and a salve until the swelling disappears completely. Many patients feel an irritation in the eyes during the time after eyelid surgery. This may be caused by the above-mentioned conditions or be a product of the healing process.

Scars

The scars will be red and lightly swollen in the first months. Hereafter they will subside and lighten. The final result of the scars can be evaluated after a year.

Reduced sensitivity of eyelashes.

Especially women will notice reduced sensitivity of the eyelashes after having eyelid surgery. This is bothersome when using eye makeup. Sensitivity will return after about 3 months.

Risks of complications

Bleeding

Swelling and discoloring around the eye is often caused by bleeding. This is often treated with cooling glasses, having the head in a raised position and staying in bed. Only very rarely is it necessary to operate to stop a bleeding. But to be safe we request that patients with serious swelling immediately meet up at the hospital for an evaluation.

Infections

An infection after eye surgery is very rare. There will be blushing, warmth and swelling. Typically, this is treated with antibiotics, eye drops and a salve, but in rare cases it is necessary to have a tablet treatment. If untreated an infection may ruin the result because of unwanted scar tissue. It is important that you immediately contact the hospital.

Closing defect

In the time after the operation there may be swelling which mean that the eyelids cannot close completely. This causes drying which may feel like “gravel” in the eyes. But typically this problem will subside when the swelling disappears. Especially when having lower eyelid surgery there may be a more permanent closing defect. This is because there has either been removed too much skin during the operation, or that too much scar tissue has formed. This requires a new operation.

Ptosis

If damage has been done to the deeper muscles on the upper eyelids, this may cause so called ptosis, in which the damaged eyelid hangs lower than the other. This is an extremely rare complication in common upper eyelid surgery but requires a new operation.

Durability

The skin's elasticity continues to decrease after your operation. This means that problems with loose skin above and under the eyes may slowly return. Both hereditary and outside factors play a role, and it is a good idea to avoid smoking and direct sun exposure. It is thus individual whether irritations again become crucial for the patient.