

Frequently Asked Questions About Cosmetic Eyelid Surgery

We understand that making decisions about eyelid surgery can be difficult. From our previous experience informed patients will be the most satisfied with their results. Our team of surgeons have provided the content on this page for informational purposes. This is not intended to replace the advice of your physician. Detailed preoperative and postoperative instructions will be given at your visit.

What is cosmetic eyelid surgery?

Cosmetic eyelid surgery involves sculpting the upper and lower eyelids to restore a youthful appearance to the eyes, and sometimes to improve vision. Cosmetic Upper Blepharoplasty involves removing excess skin and fat to restore a youthful eyelid appearance. Cosmetic Ptosis Surgery lifts a droopy eyelid and opens the eye. Lower eyelid surgery removes lower lid bags and improves the appearance of dark circles. Most patients look younger and more rested after successful eyelid surgery.

I am of Asian ancestry. What can you do for my eyes?

Many Asian patients request a "double" upper eyelid. Cosmetic Double Eyelid Surgery creates or accentuates an eyelid crease. This can be performed with or without extra eyelid skin removal. Lower eyelid surgery typically involves removal of lower lid bags by repositioning the fat within the lower lids.

How are lower eyelids treated?

There are many options to enhance the appearance of the lower lids. Dr. Kossler specializes in lower lid surgery and will recommend a customized surgical plan for you. Lower eyelid bags are often treated with a transconjunctival incision (incision behind the eyelid) to avoid a visible scar. The lower lid fat is typically repositioned to improve the appearance of the eyelid bag and dark circle. Some patients may be candidates for fat transfer, mid-face elevation, and/or canthoplasty (tightening the eyelids).

What is the success rate of cosmetic eyelid surgery?

Eyelid surgery is very successful in patients who have been properly educated and have reasonable expectations. Patients that have already had eyelid surgery should alert the surgeon, as previous surgery can alter the results of subsequent surgery and expectations should be discussed.

How is cosmetic eyelid surgery performed?

Our surgeons attempt to maximize results while minimizing side effects by individualizing each procedure to the patient. Surgery can be performed under local anesthesia (eyelid asleep), conscious sedation (twilight), or general anesthesia (patient asleep). After performing surgery, fine absorbable or removable sutures are used. The patient returns home the same day.

How long does the operation take?

Depending on the surgery location, you will arrive anywhere between 30 minutes and 90 minutes before surgery and remain until released by the nurse. Dr. Kossler performs surgery at the Byers Eye Institute Ambulatory Surgery Center and the Procedure Room. Both are state of the art facilities with specialized oculofacial plastic surgery care. The actual procedure generally takes 45 min for the upper lids and 1-2 hours for the lower lids, depending on the planned procedure.

ANDREA L. KOSSLER, MD

Is there any pain after surgery?

Patients have surprisingly little discomfort after most eyelid procedures. Generally, over the counter Extra Strength Tylenol in conjunction with ice pack placement over the eyes for 24 to 48 hours is all that is needed. An occasional patient will require stronger medication which can be provided upon request.

What can I expect immediately after surgery?

When you go home after surgery, your eyes will be swollen and there may be significant bruising. Swelling typically worsens over the first 3 days prior to improving. This may be unequal comparing each side. Depending on your procedure, bruising may start in eyelids and move lower on your face, this may take more than two weeks to fade. We ask our patients to recognize that healing occurs gradually over weeks to months, although most improvement occurs in the first month. We ask you not to plan any major social events for at least one month or longer after your procedure. We also ask that you be patient with the healing process. Most patients will be very happy with surgical results by 1 month but the result will continue to improve over the next 6-12 months. Occasionally, a patient may heal slowly and need several months to be content with the results which will continue to improve over the next 6-12 months.

Can I do anything to minimize the swelling and bruising?

Each patient heals differently and the following instructions will help minimize swelling and bruising. Use frequent ice pack for 48-72 hours after surgery. We ask you to keep your head elevated while sleeping. Please avoid strenuous activity, heavy lifting or straining after surgery. Consuming a low sodium diet may help decrease swelling. We will ask you to stop blood-thinning medications and supplements (please review the full list of blood thinning medications in your pre op packet) two weeks prior to your surgery if approved by your prescribing physician. Some patients have found good results with oral or topical Arnica Montana to reduce bruising, this is available online and in drug stores. Rarely, a patient will purchase Ocumend healing pads which may help expedite bruising. This is available online or Dr. Kossler can direct you to local vendors.

Will I have a scar?

Any surgical intervention can have scars (incisions) which fade with time. The key is placing the incision in a place which is not noticeable, and meticulous wound closure to minimize the appearance of the incision (scars). For upper eyelid surgery, incisions are hidden in the eyelid crease. For lower eyelids, incisions are made on the inside of the eyelid (for fat removal or repositioning) or just below the eyelash line to conceal it. Rarely, a patient may develop a visible scar regardless of the surgical technique or location of incision. This is extremely rare on the eyelids. Some patients use silicone gel (biocorneum), Vitamin E oil, Maderma or other topical ointments over the incision combined with massage to expedite healing. This is typically only recommended for facial reconstructive procedures where the incisions are not hidden.

Are the eyes patched closed?

Your eyes are never patched closed. We place ointment in the eyes that modestly blurs your vision. If you notice significant problems with your vision, we want to know immediately. If you are having lower lid surgery, Dr. Kossler may place steri strips (bandaids) in the corner of your eye or tape over your cheeks to improve healing. If you are having eyebrow surgery you may have a head bandage. Dr. Kossler will give you instructions about any special dressings if necessary. We ask that you keep ice packs or packets of frozen peas on your eyes for 48-72 hours after surgery when you are awake but resting.

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Will I be given any medications after the surgery?

You will be prescribed an antibiotic eye ointment after surgery to pick up at your pharmacy after the surgery. You may also be prescribed oral antibiotics, pain medications or anti-inflammatory medications depending on your surgery. Prescribed medications are used 7 to 10 days after the surgery. Pain medication is rarely prescribed as Extra Strength Tylenol helps with post-operative discomfort.

How many postoperative visits will I have?

We see you one week after surgery and periodically after that depending on your procedure. Dr. Kossler will give you a detailed plan at your visit.

Where is the procedure performed?

We perform cosmetic eyelid surgery in three different Stanford surgical locations. We use our surgical procedure room here at the Byers Eye Institute for cases that are done under local anesthesia, where you are awake but your eyelids are asleep. We may prescribe a medication (valium) to sedate you prior to the procedure to make you more comfortable. Dr. Kossler operates at the Byers Eye Institute Outpatient Surgery Center and the Ambulatory Surgery Center at the Stanford Cancer Center Building for surgical cases requiring conscious sedation and general anesthesia.

When can I return to normal activities?

You can shower 24 hours after surgery, taking care not to get the force of the shower in your face. Most patients are watching TV within one to two days after surgery, and can read and work at a computer terminal within three to four days. The eyes will fatigue quicker during this period and may be uncomfortable with extended use. Please note, the vision will be blurry 1 week after surgery due to the ointment prescribed. Patients generally return to work seven to ten days after surgery and resume athletic workouts one to two weeks after surgery. Do not swim or use a hot tub for two weeks after surgery. Please refrain from eyelid makeup for two weeks after surgery.

What if I've had LASIK or other refractive surgery?

Patients who "throw away" eyeglasses following corrective vision surgery often find that eyelid bags previously hidden by the glasses appear more pronounced. Patients who have had successful corrective vision surgery are excellent candidates for cosmetic eyelid surgery. We usually recommend that three to six months separate cosmetic eyelid surgery and refractive surgery.

Can other procedures be performed at the same time?

Yes, other facial surgical can be combined with eyelid surgery. Brow lift (forehead lift), ptosis repair (droopy eyelid surgery), fat transposition, mid-face lifting, canthoplasty (eyelid tightening), dermal fillers, and neuromodulators (Botox, Xeomin) are the most commonly performed additional procedures.

How much does surgery cost?

Fees reflect your specific issue and the extent of surgery needed to correct it. A price estimate will be given at your consultation for cosmetic surgery that includes the professional fee, the fee for the operating room, and the fee for anesthesia if required.

Will my insurance cover eyelid surgery?

Insurance does not pay for cosmetic surgery.