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## **Blepharoplasty - Eyelid Surgery, Eyelid lift, Eyelid Rejuvenation**

The eyes are thought of as the “mirror of the soul” and arguably are one of the most expressive features of the face. Eyelid surgery can dramatically improve one’s appearance by restoring a youthful and less fatigued look. The procedure can correct drooping upper eyelids that tend to sag with age and time and impair vision, and reduce puffy bags that may develop below the eyes. Whether eyelid surgery is performed for medical or cosmetic reasons the aim is to improve the aesthetic appearance while retaining natural shape and maintaining or improving function. The result can be a refreshed appearance with a firmer eye area.

Blepharoplasty does not alter dark circles, sagging eyebrows or fine lines and wrinkles around the eyes but it does improve drooping eyelids.

The surgery can be performed as a single procedure or in conjunction with a browlift / forehead lift, facelift / mini facelift, skin resurfacing, wrinkle relaxer (Botox / Dysport) and wrinkle fillers (Hyalaforn, Restylane, Juvéderm, Esthélis, Collagen, Aquamid) so that any other problem areas may be addressed simultaneously.

Blepharoplasty can be performed to:

- Remove excess droopy skin from the upper or lower eyelids
  - Tighten the underlying muscles and soft tissues
  - Remove excess fat “bags” from under the lower eyelids or in the upper eyelids
- Understanding the Procedure** Eyelid Surgery involves the removal of excess skin and fat from the upper and/or lower eyelids and is one of the most common cosmetic procedures. The procedure usually takes 45-60 minutes for upper or lower blepharoplasty and 90-120 minutes for both upper and lower blepharoplasty. It can be performed in hospital using local anaesthesia with or

without sedation or general anaesthesia. Stitches can be removed after 5-7 days and most patients return to work 1 to 2 weeks after surgery. In upper eyelid surgery incisions are made in the natural skin folds so that fine scars are less visible. Excess and loose skin can then be removed. In lower eyelid surgery the incision is normally made along the lash line or smile creases (**external subciliary incision**) of the lower lid so that excess skin and fat (bags) can then be removed. Fine sutures are used to close the incisions minimising the visibility of any scarring.



External – subciliary incision



Transconjunctival incision

Occasionally the incision can be made inside the lower eyelid. This is called a **transconjunctival blepharoplasty**. Sutures in this area are normally self dissolving and leave no visible scars. Not every patient can have this type of procedure so you need to ask Dr Chow whether you are a candidate for this.

### Double Asian Eyelid Surgery

People from East Asian background commonly have no or limited upper lid creases. Double eyelid is a normal variant and is considered to be aesthetically pleasing. People who would like to double eyelid surgery do not want Westernisation (high eyelid crease) but enhancement of their ethnic feature. Options are suture technique or surgical incision in the upper lid. While suture technique is less invasive the result is more variable and has higher recurrence in the long term. Surgery to form a permanent crease is more involved but provides the best long term result. It is performed as a day procedure under local anaesthetic with sedation.

Patients from East Asian background commonly request double eyelid surgery blepharoplasty and nasal augmentation / augmentation Rhinoplasty together.

**Revision eyelid surgery** is surgery on an area that has already been operated on. Corrections normally take longer because the surgery is more complex. Also it should be noted that reduction in swelling and healing times can take a little longer with revision surgery.

### Initial Consultation

An initial consultation gives you and Dr Chow the opportunity to discuss your intended procedure/s in full. **Some of the questions you may wish to ask are:**

- Am I a good candidate for this procedure?
  - What is a realistic outcome for me after surgery?
  - How long will the operation take?
  - What is the recovery time?
  - What are the risks involved?
  - Is post-operative medication necessary?
  - What is the charge for the procedure? It is a good idea to write down the answers Dr Chow provides so that you can review these carefully later. The consultation also provides you with an opportunity to meet Dr Chow to determine whether your personality and his are compatible and that you feel comfortable with her as your surgeon.
  - **Medical History** It is important that you are candid with Dr Chow and her staff regarding your medical history so that she can plan the best possible treatment. This information is strictly confidential. Please inform her of any:
    - Previous facial and/or cosmetic surgery (nose, eyelids, breasts etc.)
    - Past and current medical conditions such as heart, lung and kidney disease, prolonged bleeding or excessive bruising, blood clots in the legs or lungs, or gastric reflux.
    - Current medications especially Aspirin, Plavix, Iscover, Anti-inflammatories, Warfarin, blood thinners, Insulin, and oral contraceptive pills. Over the counter products such as vitamins and herbal medications may also be important.
    - Allergies or adverse reactions to antibiotics, anaesthetic drugs or other medications.
    - Psychological and psychiatric illnesses
    - Past keloid scarring or poor healing
    - Connective tissue disorders such rheumatoid arthritis, lupus erythematosus, scleroderma or similar
    - Previous radiotherapy to the head, neck
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Dr Chow will then examine your features and after discussing options and specific risks and benefits will recommend the most appropriate procedure/s for you.

We respect your privacy. During your consultation you will be able to view some *before and after* photographs. We emphasise that the only photos shown are those of patients who have given their written permission to do so.

### **MAKING A DECISION TO PROCEED WITH SURGERY**

Whether your surgery is desired for functional or cosmetic reasons, your choice of a qualified facial plastic surgeon is of paramount importance. As a Facial Plastic and Cosmetic Plastic Surgeon, Dr Chow is trained in both Otolaryngology Head & Neck Surgery and Facial Plastic surgery, which provides you, the patient, with the highest level of training and expertise.

You should be informed as much as possible before making a decision to proceed with cosmetic surgery. Cosmetic surgery is an elective procedure, which means that it is a personal choice and not necessary for maintenance of good health. You can expect a thorough explanation from Dr Chow regarding the various types of surgical and non surgical procedures. Dr Chow will inform you of the best methods of anaesthesia, the surgical facility where your procedure will take place and the benefits and risks involved in surgery. Following a joint decision by you and Dr Chow to go ahead with a procedure, photographs of you will be taken and Dr Chow will further discuss the options available.

A good rapport between you and Dr Chow and realistic expectations are prerequisites for successful outcome. You are most likely to be pleased with the results if you have a realistic idea of what surgery can and cannot do. Please do not hesitate to seek another doctor's opinion if you are uncertain about Dr Chow's advice. You are the most qualified person to select a surgeon that is right for you.

**The goal is for a natural, aesthetically pleasing and balanced look.**

### **PREOPERATIVE (Before surgery) INSTRUCTIONS**

- Please cease Aspirin, Aspirin-containing products, Plavix, Iscover and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (such as Ibuprofen) for 10 days prior to and two weeks following your surgery. If you are on any medications that affect bleeding (such as Warfarin) please notify Dr Chow.
- Smoking tobacco and alcohol increase anaesthetic and surgical risks. Please cease them for one to two weeks prior to and three weeks following surgery. They cause delayed wound healing, skin redness and other complications.
- Please notify us of all your routine medications and significant health history. You can remain on your daily medications, except for blood thinners unless instructed

otherwise.

- Arnica, a natural herb that significantly decreases bruising, can be taken before and after surgery along with Vitamin C (ascorbic acid), which helps promote healing.
- If you are having a morning procedure you must not eat or drink after midnight the evening before. If you are having an afternoon procedure you must not eat or drink after 6.00am on the morning of surgery. You may, however, take your normal medications and brush your teeth.
- Please shower and remove any make-up and nail polish before arriving for your procedure.
- Unless you are remaining in hospital someone will need to drive you home after surgery and stay with you that evening.
- If you have any concerns please call the office. Remember, we are all here to give you the best possible care.

### **POSTOPERATIVE (After Surgery) INSTRUCTIONS**

Dr Chow may apply tiny sterile dressings, which should be left on for 4-5 days. She will also prescribe an antibiotic ointment (Chloromycetin) to prevent infection and dryness of the eyes. There will be a small amount of swelling and bruising, and head elevation and cold or iced compresses (30 minutes every hour for 48 hours) will help to reduce this. It is important to continue applying the eye ointment and a moisturising ointment directly on the incision regularly (4 times per day) in order to keep it clean. These incisions can get wet after 36-48 hours as water, soap and shampoo trickle over them. The incisions should not be directly scrubbed or irritated. The sutures are removed 5-7 days after surgery. Always protect your face from the sun by wearing a hat and sunglasses. Following surgery, our staff will tell you when it is OK to apply sunscreen, cosmetics and facial creams. You should rest for the entire day after surgery. You should do nothing that involves excessive bending, lifting or straining. Do not drive for one week following surgery. One to two weeks off work is recommended.

**Medications:** Dr Chow will prescribe antibiotic ointment (Chloromycetin) and pain relief to be used as directed. In most cases Dexamethasone 4 mg twice a day for 5 days is prescribed to reduce swelling. Most patients complain of discomfort rather than pain. Do not take additional pain relievers other than what Dr Chow suggests or prescribes and start any antibiotics when you get home. You can take painkillers such as Panadol / Paracetamol, Panadiene Forte, Tramadol or Oxycodone and antibiotic. Avoid Aspirin, Aspirin-containing products, Plavix and non-steroidal anti-inflammatories (such as Ibuprofen) for two weeks following your surgery. If you are on any medications that

affect bleeding (such as Warfarin) please notify Dr Chow. Take Vitamin C (ascorbic acid) which helps promote healing, for two weeks following surgery. Take Arnica, a natural herb that significantly decreases bruising for one week following surgery.

**Please Remember.** Following Blepharoplasty, it takes time for the swelling to subside and for the skin to heal. Most patients return to work between one to two weeks after surgery. Swelling, bruising and disrupted sleep are very normal postoperative symptoms and will decrease as the healing process occurs. Assistance with daily activities during the first two to three days after surgery is strongly recommended.

**Final results** following a blepharoplasty are not fully apparent for up to 6 months following surgery. We recommend that you have follow up appointments for at least one year for assessment and postoperative photographs.

**Please Inform Dr Chow's office or the hospital where the procedure was performed** if you have the following or other concerns:

- High fever, chills or a temperature of more than 38 degrees
- Heavy bleeding from the wound
- Severe pain or tenderness
- Visual loss
- Significant redness, or discharge around the incision
- Significant swelling

**Risks of Surgery** Modern surgery is safe but does have risks. Complications can occur despite the highest standards and world's best practice principles used by Dr Chow. It is not possible to list all the risks but you should be informed of the common side effects and benefits so that you can make an informed consent. Dr Chow will discuss these in greater detail at consultation. You should write down any particular questions or specific concerns. **The potential risks are**

#### **General Risks**

- Wound infection – may require antibiotics
- Bleeding, blood clots or seroma

- Chest infection
- Sore throat from the breathing tube
- Scars that become raised (hypertrophic or keloid)

### **Specific Risks**

- Pain and discomfort
- Bruising for usually 2 -3 weeks
- Temporary swelling causing tightness around the eyes
- Too much skin removal – may cause inability to close the eyes and corneal injury
- Rounding of the eyelid margin or retraction of the lower lid
- Asymmetry of the eyelids
- Scars at the incision site
- Temporary change in vision – usually short term, rarely permanent
- Itchiness, dry or watery eyes- may require artificial tears. Rarely permanent.
- Very rarely loss of vision- risk is 1 in 40,000. People with pre-existing eye conditions, or smoking, heavy lifting or coughing have higher risks