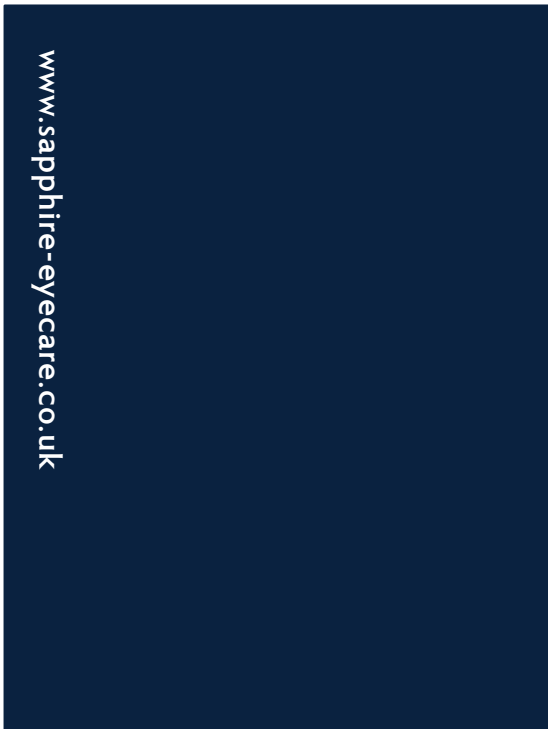


# BLEPHAROPLASTY



[www.sapphire-eyecare.co.uk](http://www.sapphire-eyecare.co.uk)



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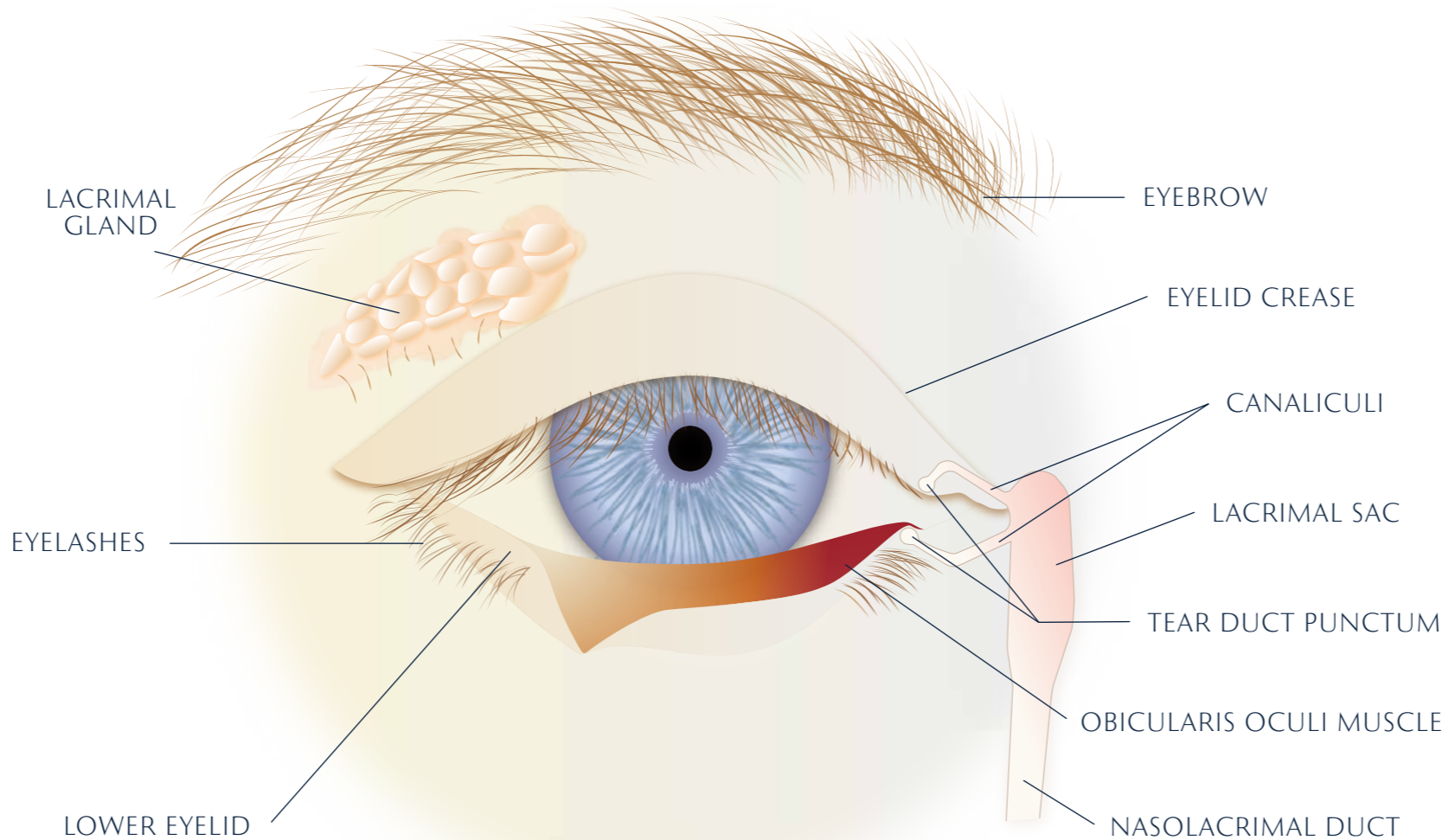
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## EYELID ANATOMY

It is important to know a little bit about the anatomy of the eyelids and how they function, as well as the surrounding tissues which together support the function of the eye.



The role of the eyelids is to provide protection and lubrication to the surface of the eye.

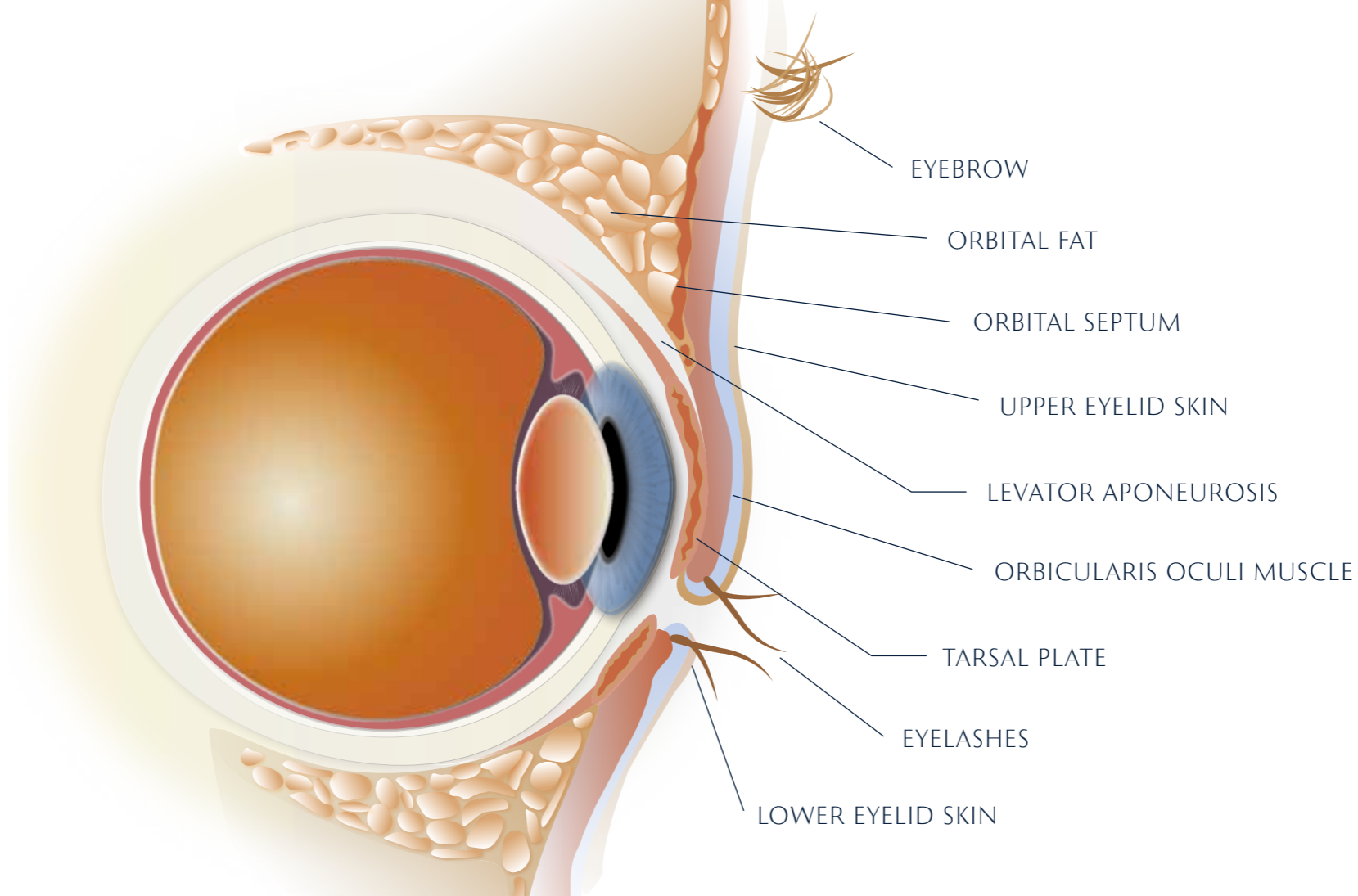
In simple terms, the eyelids can be divided into two layers. The front (anterior) layer is made up of skin and muscle, and the back (posterior) layer is made up of tarsal plate (including meibomian glands) and conjunctiva (the wet mucosa membrane that coats the inside of the eyelids and the surface of the eye). Between these layers, above and below the tarsal plate, is the orbital septum.

The eyelid position can alter if some of those layers and surrounding structures weaken or loosen as we get older. Changes in the skin of the eyelid – either stretching or tightening – can also influence the position of the eyelid and its appearance. Changes in the orbital septum can allow the fat pads in the orbit to bulge forward, causing swellings in the upper and lower eyelids.

The surface of the eye is lubricated by the tear film. The tear film is made up of three layers: a mucous layer that sits on the surface of the eye, an aqueous layer produced by the lacrimal gland, and a lipid layer produced by the meibomian glands of the upper and lower tarsal plates within the lids.

The tarsal plates also provide rigidity and a hard protective layer within the eyelids. The opening and closing of the eyelids is controlled by the orbicularis oculi muscle that contracts to close the eyelids, and the levator muscle and its tendon that lift and open the upper eyelid.

This constant opening and closing of the eyelid (blinking), spreads fresh tears over the surface of the eye and also allows the tear drainage channels to pump the tears away from the eye and down the tear duct into the nose. Problems with the function of the eyelids or blockages into the tear drainage channels can be some of the causes of a watery eye.



# what is blepharoplasty?

A blepharoplasty is an operation to remove the excess skin and/or fat from either the upper or lower eyelids, or both.



An upper lid blepharoplasty can be undertaken for either functional or cosmetic reasons. If the excess skin on your eyelids is beginning to block part of your peripheral vision, removing that skin can make a considerable difference to your quality of vision and your visual field. If you're considering the surgery for cosmetic reasons, it can be very effective in recreating a youthful look for the eyelids. This is more common as we get older. A lower lid blepharoplasty is usually considered for cosmetic reasons. In the lower eyelids, stretching and changes in the lower lid tissues cause 'eye bags' which often creates dark shadows under the eyelids. Lower lid blepharoplasty can help to improve the tired look that can develop with age. The surgery can also help to tighten the skin in the lower lids.

### WHAT HAPPENS DURING SURGERY?

Surgery can be carried out under local or general anaesthetic, or with sedation. We start by making a careful assessment of the amount of excess skin on your eyelids. If lower lid surgery is planned, a careful assessment is made of the location and distribution of the fat pads under the eyes, and we mark any excess skin.

In the upper lids, an incision is made in the skin crease and another slightly above this. At this stage, we can remove any fat that might need to be reduced. The incision is then closed with a line of sutures. In the lower eyelids, incisions can be made either in the skin just below the eyelashes or, if only fat is being removed, on the inside of the eyelid. The prolapsed fat (tissue that has slipped downwards) is then either removed or repositioned. Any excess skin is carefully removed.

The sutures are removed after one to two weeks. The eyelids will remain swollen for a few weeks and the final result is not visible until at least two months after surgery. For more details, please see our post-operative advice page.



### WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF BLEPHAROPLASTY SURGERY?

As with any form of surgery, there are potential risks involved in blepharoplasty, although serious complications are very rare. The risks include:

- **Infection.** This is very rare around the eyelids.
- **Bruising and swelling.** This is very common after eyelid surgery, but usually settles after a week.
- **Scarring.** The scar from blepharoplasty forms along the natural skin crease of the eyelid and heals very well.
- **Under- or over-correction.** Although we measure the amount of skin removed very carefully, sometimes further surgery is needed.
- **Asymmetry.** A subtle difference from one side of your face to the other can occur following surgery, but it is rarely an issue as we all naturally have a small amount of facial asymmetry. If the asymmetry is an issue post operatively, further adjustments can be made.
- **Dry eye.** Occasionally surgery to the upper eyelids can worsen dry eye symptoms, but this is often transient. A careful preoperative assessment of the ocular surface will be made to reduce this risk and manage any dry eye issues prior to performing surgery.
- **Double vision.** Very rarely, the delicate muscles that move the eye and are close to the lower lid fat pads can be affected. This could cause double vision, but it would only last for a short period of time.
- **Reduced vision.** Any operation performed on the eyelids could in theory cause damage to your eyesight. Fortunately this is extremely rare.

# 03. Surgery

Eyelid surgery can be done under local or general anaesthetic, and your surgeon will discuss both options with you.



## A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE SURGERY

- If you take a blood thinner (such as aspirin or ibuprofen), your surgeon will have explained what you should do before the operation. If you are not sure, the plan will be included in your clinic letter.

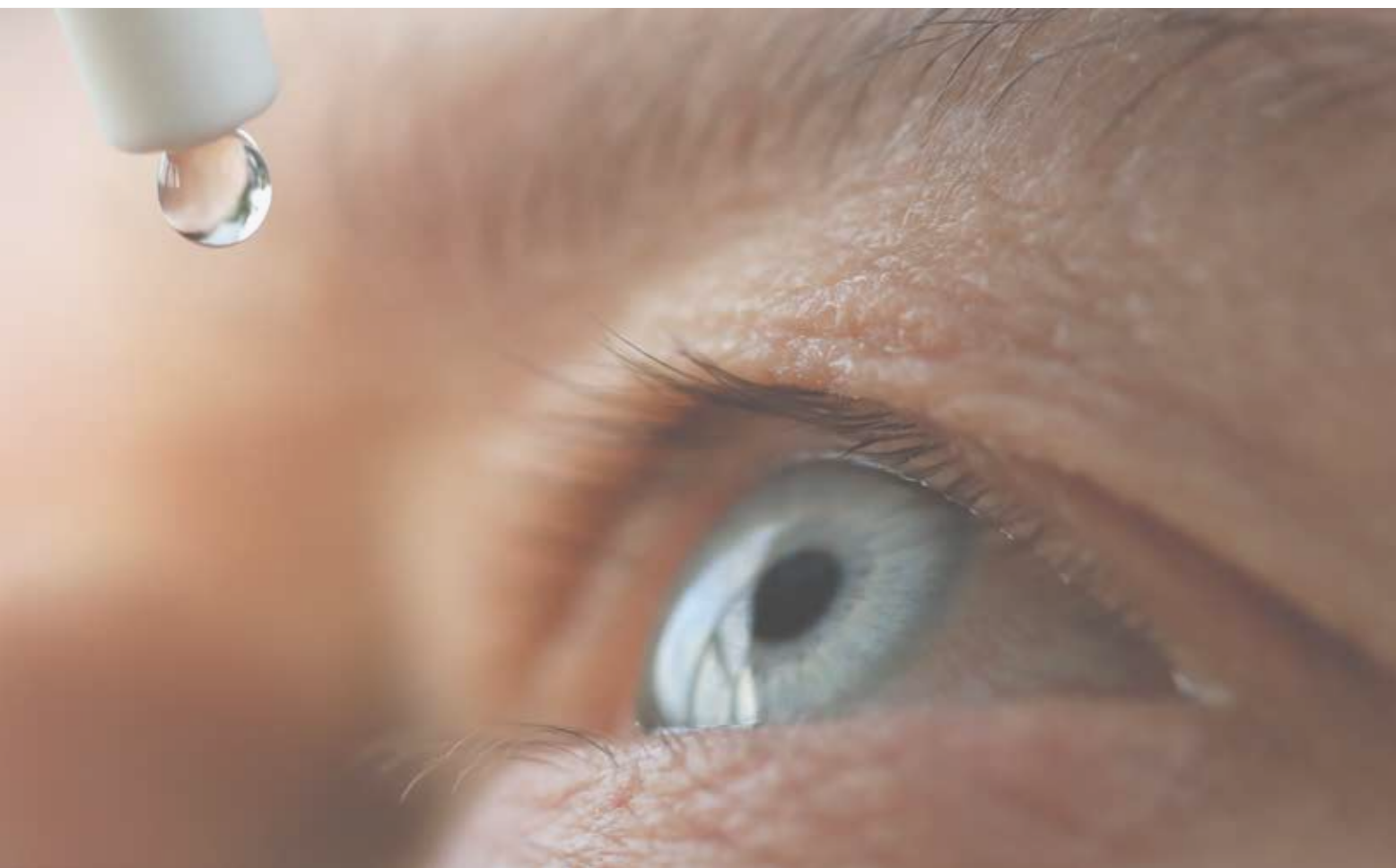
Not everyone on blood thinners will need to stop them for surgery. If you are unsure please give the team a call, and we will clarify everything.

- If you take any herbal supplements such as omega 3 or fish oils, it is advisable to stop taking them two weeks prior to your eyelid surgery. If you are unsure, please ask a member of the team.

- Make sure you have a few extra pillows available at home (v-shaped pillows can be helpful for this), or elevate the head of the bed a little (this can be done with a few books or blocks under the feet of the bed at the head end). Keeping your head elevated when lying down for the first 72 hours will help to minimise any post-operative eyelid swelling.

- Have a soft ice pack or bag of frozen peas in the freezer ready to use when you get home after the surgery. It is advisable to wrap these in a clean pillowcase in order to protect the scar.

If you are unsure about any of these points, please contact the team, for more advice.



## UNDER local anaesthetic

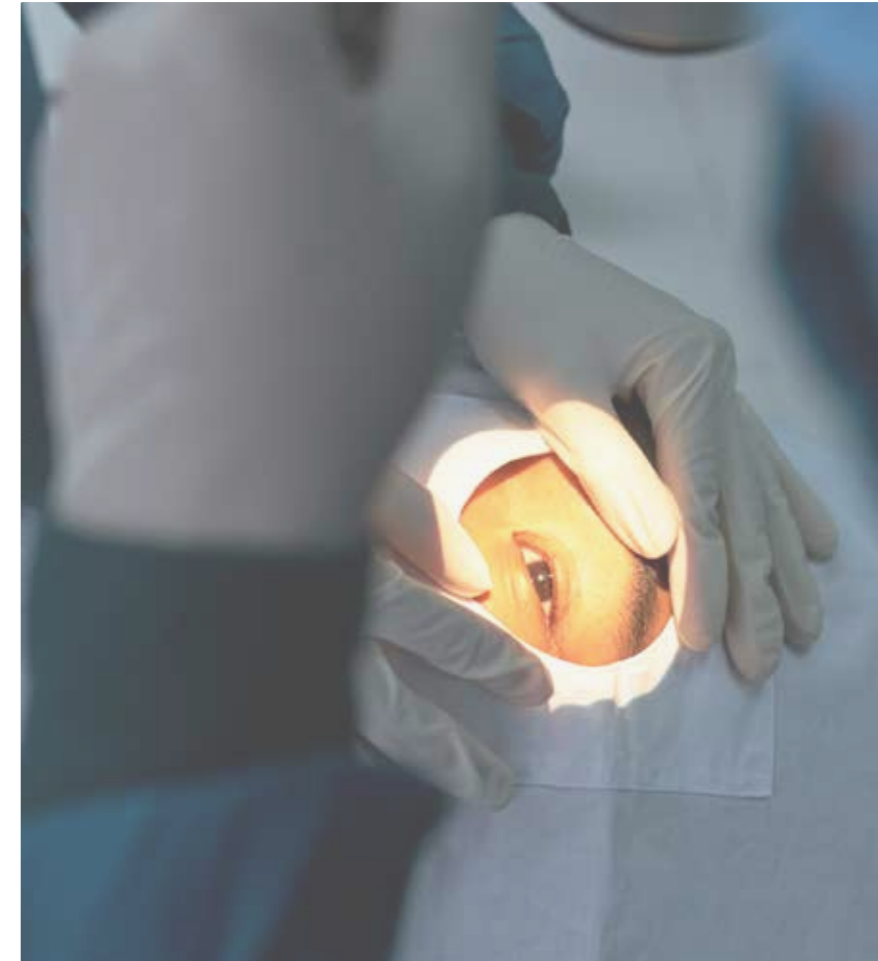
### **ON THE DAY OF SURGERY**

- Someone will need to bring you to and collect you from the hospital. If you are unable to arrange transport, please contact our team who will be able to assist you.
- If you are having a local anaesthetic you should have a light breakfast or lunch, prior to coming in for surgery. It is not advisable to attend for surgery under local anaesthetic with an empty stomach.
- Choose some comfortable clothes to wear, specifically something that will remain loose around your neck when lying down during the procedure.
- When you arrive at the clinic the nursing staff will greet you and run through a few checks. After this you will be seen by the surgeon who will be able to answer any remaining questions.
- After the procedure has been performed you will be taken to a recovery area and ice packs will be applied to your eyelids. You should be able to go home approximately 45-60 mins after the surgery.
- A follow-up appointment will be arranged by the Sapphire Eye Care team.

# UNDER general anaesthetic

## ON THE DAY OF SURGERY

- You must not eat for six hours prior to surgery if you are having a general anaesthetic or sedation. Please keep well hydrated and only drink water up to two hours before the procedure. You will receive further information and instructions from the hospital where your surgery is taking place.
- Someone will need to bring you to and collect you from the hospital. If you need help to arrange transport, please contact our team.
- After your operation, someone will need to stay at home with you overnight.
- Choose some comfortable clothes to wear. When you arrive at the hospital you will change into a hospital gown in your private room.
- Nursing staff will greet you when you arrive, and will run through a few checks. After this, you will be seen by the surgeon who will be able to answer any remaining questions.
- You will also then meet the anaesthetist who will be able to answer any questions you have about the anaesthetic.
- After the procedure has been performed you will be taken to a recovery area and ice packs will be applied to your eyelids. You will be able to go home when you are awake, feeling well and have had something to eat and drink. This is usually about 2-3 hours after the surgery finishes.
- A follow up appointment will be arranged by the Sapphire Eye Care team.



## AFTER THE SURGERY

- When you get home it is important to rest and take things easy.
- Most people experience a little discomfort and swelling after treatment. The best way to manage this is to rest quietly and apply an ice-pack four times per day for the first 48 hours. You can use the ice-pack more frequently if it is helpful, but for no more than 20 minutes at a time. Always wrap the ice pack in a tea towel to avoid causing an ice burn on the skin.
- Immediately after surgery you may have blurred vision. This is normal and is due to the antibiotic ointment which is applied to your eyes, and some eyelid swelling.
- You may experience ocular surface irritation and dry eyes for a short period of time. The eyelid is likely to feel a bit numb for a few weeks after surgery.
- It is not normally painful after surgery, but if you do experience some pain you may take pain relief such as paracetamol. Take care to avoid aspirin as this can thin the blood and cause unnecessary bleeding.
- You should avoid strenuous activity or anything that may raise your blood pressure or heart rate for the first two weeks.
- You may also want to wear dark glasses to protect your eyes from wind or sun irritation. Try to stay away from smoky or dusty environments.
- It is advised that you avoid smoking and wearing contact lenses during your blepharoplasty recovery.
- Some patients find that using extra pillows for added support at night-time eases any temporary discomfort and helps reduce any post operative eyelid swelling.
- If you need to clean the eyelid please use the sterile saline solution and gauze provided to you, and remember to use the antibiotic ointment as prescribed.



## THINKING ABOUT EXPECTATIONS

When people decide to have surgery that changes how they look, whether for medical reasons or to improve appearance, it can bring high hopes and high emotions. Open and honest conversations with your surgeon help us understand what matters most to you, and that helps us guide you towards realistic expectations and to deliver the best care. We always aim to get as close as possible to your desired result, but it's important to remember that no surgery can deliver perfection. Eyelid surgery usually goes very well, but like any surgery, there may be complications (outlined above), or results that aren't exactly as you expected. Everyone's body heals differently and sometimes, even with great care, the outcome may not be perfect. It is important to remember that final appearance after most aesthetic surgery may not be achieved for several months. In rare cases, more treatment or further surgery might be needed. If you have any concerns before or after the surgery, the whole team here at Sapphire is here to reassure you, and if any problems do come up, we'll be here to help for as long as needed.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:**  
**Will there be any bruising or numbness?**

Most blepharoplasty patients experience a small amount of bruising and lid swelling. This can track down into the lower lids. Most residual bruising should fade within 7-14 days. Some patients may also experience slight numbness of the eyelid, and this can last for a few weeks after surgery. Bruising can be minimised by the regular use of a cold compress and keeping the head elevated when lying down.

**When can I go back to work?**

Most patients feel well enough to go back to work within a week of surgery. Of course, this depends on the nature of your work, and all blepharoplasty patients should avoid strenuous activity

for the first two weeks. For the best advice, please ask your Consultant.

**When can I exercise again?**

In the days following your surgery, gentle exercise, such as walking or stretching will not prove problematic. For the first two weeks you should avoid taking part in any strenuous activity that raises your heart rate or blood pressure, or any activity which places your head below your body (e.g. yoga).

**When can I drive after surgery?**

If you drove prior to surgery and you meet the DVLA standards, there is no reason you should not be able to drive within 1-2 days of treatment.

**Can I shower or wash my face & hair?**

You can still take a shower or bath



after surgery, but try and keep the wounds dry. A little clean water on the wounds will not be a problem, but we would not recommend exposing the wounds to longer periods of moisture.

If you wash your hair, do so by tilting your head backwards, if possible. It is important to avoid picking at scabs as they will fall off when they are ready.

**When can I wear make-up again after surgery?**

We advise against wearing make-up in the area around your eye(s) for the two weeks after surgery.

After sutures have been removed, your Consultant will advise if you may return to make-up and hair washing as normal.

**Will I need ointment after my surgery?**

You will be provided with an antibiotic ointment, which you will need to apply to the wounds three times a day, plus a little in each eye. You may find the use of over-the-counter lubricating eye drops keeps your eyes comfortable in the early days following the surgery.

**Can I use arnica?**

There is no medical evidence that using arnica helps with bruising and swelling after surgery, although some patients find that it is helpful. We advise against using any topical preparations, however we would not object to you taking oral preparations of arnica starting from two days after the operation. It is important not to take them before surgery.



### **ADVICE AFTER YOUR SURGERY**

If you experience any deterioration in your vision, increasing discharge from the eye, continual aching or worsening pain, please contact us immediately.

**03330 344955**

During out-of-office hours, please contact the hospital where the surgical procedure took place.



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