BLEPHAROPLASTY PATIENT HANDOUT

What Is Blepharoplasty?

Blepharoplasty is a surgical procedure that rejuvenates the upper eyelids, lower eyelids, or both by removing or repositioning excess skin, fat, and tissue around the eyes. It is one of the most performed facial cosmetic surgeries worldwide.

The procedure can be performed for cosmetic reasons:

- Cosmetic blepharoplasty: To restore a more youthful, rested, and alert appearance to the eyes by addressing drooping skin, puffiness, or under-eye bags.

Upper vs. Lower Blepharoplasty

	Upper Blepharoplasty	Lower Blepharoplasty
What it addresses	Drooping or hooded upper eyelid skin; excess fat; heaviness	Under-eye bags; puffiness; loose skin below the eyes
Incision location	Hidden within the natural upper eyelid crease	Inside the lower eyelid (transconjunctival) or just below the lash line
Procedure time	~1 hour	~1–1.5 hours
Most common reason	Cosmetic (refreshed, rested appearance)	Cosmetic (refreshed, rested appearance)
Can be combined?	Yes — with lower blepharoplasty, brow lift, or facelift	Yes — with upper blepharoplasty or other facial procedures

Are You a Good Candidate?

You may be a candidate for blepharoplasty if you have:

- Excess or drooping upper eyelid skin that makes you look tired or aged
- Upper eyelid skin that partially blocks your vision
- Puffy "bags" or excess fat under the lower eyes
- Loose or wrinkled lower eyelid skin
- Realistic expectations and good overall health

Contraindications — surgery may not be appropriate if you:

- Have uncontrolled dry eye syndrome (surgery can worsen this)
- Are an active smoker (impairs healing)
- Have uncontrolled systemic conditions such as thyroid disease, diabetes, or high blood pressure
- Have a history of certain eye conditions (e.g., glaucoma, retinal detachment)
- Have untreated body dysmorphic disorder or unrealistic expectations
- Are taking blood thinners without medical clearance to pause them

The Procedure: What to Expect

Before Surgery

- A thorough evaluation of your eyelid anatomy, skin quality, and eye health will be performed
- Inform the surgeon of all medications, supplements, and vitamins — particularly blood thinners, aspirin, and NSAIDs
- Patients are started on Grenzcine eye cream to improve post-operative results
- Stop smoking at least 4–6 weeks before surgery
- Arrange for someone to drive you home and assist you for the first 24–48 hours

During Surgery

- Performed as a day surgery at ODC— you go home the same day
- Usually done under local anesthesia or local anesthesia with sedation; combined upper and lower procedures may use general anesthesia
- Upper blepharoplasty: incisions are hidden within the natural eyelid crease; excess skin, fat, and sometimes muscle are carefully removed
- Lower blepharoplasty: fat is removed or repositioned through an incision just below the lash line to minimize visible scarring
- Sutures are typically fine and are removed within 5–7 days

Recovery Timeline

Timeframe	What to Expect
Days 1–2	Swelling, bruising, and mild discomfort are normal. Apply cold compresses for the first 48 hours. Keep your head elevated.
Days 3–7	Bruising begins to fade. Antibiotic ointment applied to sutures. Artificial tear drops as needed for dry eyes.
Day 5–7	Non-dissolving sutures removed.
Week 2	Most bruising and swelling subsided. Many patients return to work and social activities.
Day 10+	Makeup can generally be used to cover any residual bruising.
Weeks 3–6	Continued improvement. Avoid strenuous exercise during this period.
3–6 months	Final results are fully visible as all swelling resolves.

Risks and Complications

Serious complications from blepharoplasty are rare, but all surgery carries risk. Dr. Chitte will discuss these in detail during your consultation.

Common and Expected (Temporary)

- Bruising and swelling — all patients experience some degree, usually lasting up to 2 weeks
- Dry eyes, watery eyes, or light sensitivity — usually temporary
- Slight inability to close the eye fully (lagophthalmos) for a day or two
- Blurred vision in the first few days
- Mild discomfort or tightness

Less Common

- Infection
- Asymmetry or contour irregularity
- Scarring or poor wound healing (higher risk in patients with lichen sclerosus or other skin conditions)
- Lagophthalmos—Difficulty closing the eyelids completely. If persistent, this can lead to exposure keratitis (corneal dryness and damage)
- Ectropion — outward turning of the lower eyelid, which may require revision surgery
- Over-resection (removal of too much skin or fat) — can cause a hollow appearance or inability to fully close the eye

Rare but Serious

- Retrobulbar hematoma (bleeding behind the eye) — rare but requires urgent treatment
- Vision changes or, very rarely, vision loss

Overall patient satisfaction rates range from 85–93% when performed by an experienced surgeon.

Functional Benefits

Beyond cosmetic improvement, upper blepharoplasty can provide meaningful functional benefits:

- Studies report improvements in the superior visual field of approximately 20–30% following upper eyelid surgery
- Reduction in brow strain and forehead fatigue associated with chronic eyelid drooping
- Improved comfort with reading, driving, and daily activities

Non-Surgical Alternatives

For patients who are not ready for or not suited to surgery, some non-surgical options may partially address concerns around the eyes:

- Botulinum toxin (Botox): Reduces crow's feet and dynamic wrinkles; can provide a subtle brow lift effect
- Dermal fillers: Can address volume loss and hollowing around the eyes (tear trough area)
- Laser resurfacing: May improve skin texture and fine lines around the eyelids
- Radiofrequency or ultrasound (e.g., Thermage, Ultherapy): Skin tightening without surgery

Note: These alternatives cannot remove excess skin or fat and are not appropriate for patients with significant skin drooping.

When to Seek Urgent Care

Contact ODC immediately or go to the nearest emergency department if you experience:

- Sudden or worsening vision changes, double vision, or vision loss
- Severe pain not controlled by prescribed medication
- Rapidly increasing swelling after day 3
- Signs of infection: fever, increasing redness, warmth, or purulent discharge
- Inability to close your eyes fully once the initial swelling subsides
- Bleeding that does not stop with gentle pressure

Questions to Ask Your Surgeon

- Am I a candidate for cosmetic blepharoplasty?
- Would I benefit from addressing upper, lower, or both eyelids?
- Are there any concerns about my dry eye status?
- What technique will you use and why?
- What are my realistic expected outcomes?

How Long Do Results Last?

Upper blepharoplasty results are long-lasting, most patients do not require repeat surgery for 10–15 years or more, as the excess skin does not typically regrow at the same rate. Lower eyelid results are also long-lasting. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle, sun protection, and good skincare helps preserve your results over time.

This handout is for general information only. Please discuss your individual treatment plan, risks, and expectations with your surgeon.