

Kaiser Permanente

Blepharoplasty

What is blepharoplasty?

Blepharoplasty is a surgical procedure in which excess skin and fat around the eyes are removed. Excess skin can develop because of:

- aging
- a history of puffy eyelids because of allergies or water retention
- an inherited tendency toward droopy eyelids.

When is it used?

This procedure may be used when:

- your field of vision is partially blocked by excess skin
- you have aches in your brow from trying to use your forehead muscles to lift drooping eyelids
- you want to change your appearance.

How do I prepare for this procedure?

You will need to arrange for someone to take you home after your surgery. Allow some time to rest at home.

Follow your doctor's instructions. Do not wear eye makeup on the day of surgery. No special preparation is needed if you are to have local anesthesia. If you are to have general anesthesia, eat a light meal, such as soup or salad, the night before the procedure. Do not eat or drink anything after midnight before the procedure. Do not even drink coffee, tea, or water.

If you take important medicines regularly, ask your doctor about taking them on the day of surgery. If you take aspirin, warfarin (Coumadin), or vitamin E ask your doctor if you should stop taking it before surgery.

What happens during the procedure?

The surgeon marks the skin that will be removed. He or she also finds any fat pads that need to be removed. The surgeon cuts away these tissues. If needed, the surgeon may modify muscles that control the eyelids to help them function better. Then the surgeon sews up the incisions with stitches.

What happens after the procedure?

You may have swelling or bruising ("black eyes") for about a week. You may have mild pain or

discomfort right after your surgery. Ask your doctor if you can take acetaminophen for pain.

You may want to rest quietly for a day or two with your head raised. Also, you may put cold compresses (a washcloth moistened with cold water) over your eyes to reduce swelling and bruising.

Right after the surgery, the incisions are red and visible. Since they are made in natural creases in your skin, they will not be visible when they heal.

If you wear contact lenses, wait about 4 days after your surgery before you put them in. If you wear glasses, you may wear them right away. Wait 2 weeks before using eye makeup.

What are the benefits of this procedure?

This procedure corrects vision problems caused by droopy eyelids. Also, you may look younger and less tired.

What are the risks of this procedure?

There are always risks associated with anesthesia. Ask your doctor about these risks. Other risks may include:

- bleeding
- infection
- rarely, double vision or loss of vision.

If your doctor removes too much skin, too much of the front of your eye may be exposed. This may lead to dry eye and problems with your cornea (the clear dome on the front of the eye).

When should I call my doctor?

Call your doctor immediately if you:

- have unusual pain
- have a sudden loss of vision
- have a lot of drainage from your eye
- develop a fever.