**BLEPHAROPLASTY SURGERY INSTRUCTIONS**

**INTRODUCTION**

Blepharoplasty is surgery performed on the eyelids to remove excess skin and fat. If the upper eyelids have enough excess skin and fat to overhand the eyelids and interfere with vision, then medical insurance typically covers surgery. In such cases, the surgery is considered functional and not just cosmetic. Bilateral upper lid blepharoplasty (BULB) opens up your field of vision, removes a weight from your eyelids that may cause a tired feeling, removes skin that rubs against your eyelid when blinking, and secondarily improves appearance. You must pass testing in the office to qualify for insurance coverage of your eyelid surgery. Surgery to remove excess skin and fat from the lower lids (BLLB), or less severe cases of the upper lids, is considered purely cosmetic and not covered by insurance.

**PROCEDURE**

Blepharoplasty surgery is an outpatient procedure performed at the ambulatory surgery center. It is usually performed on both sides at the same time. In the perioperative holding area, your eyelids will be marked with a tissue marking pen with you sitting in an upright position. An IV will be started and you will be transferred to the operating room. The surgery is performed with sedation, similar to a cataract surgery. You will likely fall asleep and not remember details of your surgery, but you may be aware of conversation and may talk. You should indicate if you feel discomfort at any time during your surgery. BULB usually takes 30-40 mins. If the lower lids are operated on as well (BLLB), the operating time is doubled. It is common to have skin tags or growths on the eyelids, and these may be removed and sent to the lab for analysis. Excess skin and fat is removed with an electocautery (Bovie) that makes a loud beeping sound. After tissue removal is complete, stitches are placed. The stitches are removed in the office 10-14 days after surgery. Plan on being at the surgery center for 2-3 hours. You must have a ride home after surgery.

**PREOPERATIVE**

* On the morning of surgery, report directly to the surgery center, not our office. Please arrive on time for your surgery. The surgery center runs a tight schedule, with many patients before and after you. Time is needed to get you ready for surgery.
* DO NOT EAT OR DRINK AFTER MIDNIGHT before surgery. You may take your usual morning medications with small sips of water only.
* History and Physical forms must be received by noon on Tuesday before your surgery.
* STOP ALL BLOOD THINNERS (MUST BE CLEARED BY YOUR PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIAN). Stop nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID’s) such as Aspirin, Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil), Naproxen (Aleve) 10 days before surgery; resume one day after surgery. Stop Xarelto, Pradaxa, or Eliquis 5 days before surgery; resume one day after surgery. Stop Warfarin (Coumadin) 3 days before surgery; resume one day after surgery. Please note that depending on your particular medical history, the risks of stopping blood thinners may outweigh the benefits of blepharoplasty surgery; this decision must be made by you and your primary care physician, cardiologist, or other prescribing doctor.
* Wash your hair and face the night before or morning of surgery. Avoid perfumes, colognes, or heavily scented toiletries.
* DO NOT WEAR EYE MAKEUP
* Wear comfortable loosely fitting clothing. You will change into a hospital gown at the surgery center.
* You do not need special drops before blepharoplasty surgery. Continue any other eye medications, such as glaucoma drops, both before and after blepharoplasty surgery.
* Do not wear contact lenses to the surgery center.

**POSTOPERATIVE**

* Eye patches or bandages are not required after blepharoplasty surgery.
* Following surgery, start applying your TobraDex (Tobramycin Dexamethasone) or Maxitrol (Neomycin Dexamethasone) ointment to your suture lines twice per day. You can wipe it on with a clean fingertip or Q-tip. In addition, squeeze some into each eye (pull the lower lid down and squeeze out a line of ointment about one half inch long) into the eye at bedtime the first night. This is necessary to help protect the eye since the eyelids may open slightly while sleeping the first night due to the local anesthetic. A prescription for your ointment will be sent to your pharmacy with refills. Continue applying the ointment to the stitches twice per day until a week after your stitches are removed. Continue all glaucoma drops or other eye medications you have been on.
* There is usually very little pain following blepharoplasty surgery. Take Extra-Strength Tylenol (Acetominophen) as needed. Do not take NSAID’s (see above) for 24 hours after surgery.
* Apply ice packs to your eyes for 5-10 mins per hour, while awake, for the first 24 hours after surgery.
* Sleep with your head elevated on two pillows the first 24 hours after surgery.
* It is normal to have a mild amount of bleeding from the incisions during the first day or two. If bleeding continues, apply firm pressure with a clean dry washcloth for 5 mins. You may have to repeat this. Use a warm wet clean washcloth to gently loosen and remove any dried blood from the eyelids.
* Bruising can be significant after blepharoplasty surgery, and may extend all the way around the eyes.
* It is normal for your vision to be mild to moderate blurry during days to weeks after blepharoplasty surgery. This is primarily due to swelling around the lids and dryness of the eyes since blinking is less efficient. It is very helpful to apply artificial tears to the eyes 4 times per day.
* IT IS CRITICAL TO AVOID HEAVY EXERTION FOR 4 WEEKS AFTER SURGERY. The eyelids take longer than average to heal since they are in constant movement. The incisions are very susceptible to splitting open if you strain too much. Call our office if any part of an incision splits open; you may need to be examined in the office and new stitches may need to be applied. You should limit exercise to activities that do not require you to strain, such as gentle bike-riding, and limit lifting to weights under 20 pounds.
* Call our office if you experience increasing redness, discharge, and puffiness around your eyelids during the first few weeks after surgery. If an infection develops, it is important to start oral antibiotics.

**POSTOPERATIVE *continued***

* Do not swim, surf, or go to the beach for 4 weeks after surgery. The beach poses a significant infection risk.
* You may take normal showers or baths, but do not scrub over your stitches; be gentle washing around your face.
* You may not resume contact lens wear at least until your sutures are removed. Discontinue contact lens wear if you experience any discomfort.
* Do not operate a motor vehicle until the day after surgery, provided you feel safe to do so.
* You may resume a normal diet after surgery, but limit alcohol intake the first night since residual sedation may still be active.
* It is critical that you follow-up for your scheduled postoperative exams.

ADV 8.1.17