Elite Plastic Surgery

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Blepharoplasty and Blepharoptosis Repair

What to Expect After Eyelid Surgery

- Following eyelid surgery, everyone gets some degree of swelling and bruising. It is difficult to predict how much bruising an individual patient will get, but you can be promised a lot of puffy! Patients are often surprised how swollen their eyelids are, particularly the first 2 to 3 days after surgery. The good news is, you will look worse than you feel. The majority of patients say that Tylenol level discomfort is all they have, but we do prescribe pain pills (typically Percocet or Tramadol) in case you have more discomfort than average.

- You do need to use a lot of ice packs the first 48 hours following surgery. The better you are with your ice packs, the less swelling you will develop overall. You can use frozen gel packs that will conform to the eyes, bags of frozen peas or bags of frozen unpopped popcorn kernels. We recommend that you use ice packs 20 minutes on, 20 minutes off while awake. Most patients start to look “respectable” starting 2 weeks after surgery. On average, 70% to 80% of patients' swelling and bruising is resolved in 2 weeks. It takes your body several weeks and upwards of 6 months to fully heal.

- Eyelids tend to heal well and overall the risk of infection following eyelid surgery is very low. Patients are prescribed an ophthalmic antibiotic ointment to use on the incision lines 4 times a day for 2 weeks following surgery. If patients have an allergy to the ointment, they can use over-the-counter Aquaphor ointment.

- It can take upwards of 10 to 12 days for eyelid skin incisions to form a strong bond. Until that bond occurs, you need to avoid a lot of bending, lifting or other activities that make your face strain (and turn red). You also need to avoid saturating your incision lines with non sterile water. That means not submerging your face in water to swim, shower/bath or wash your face.

- It is okay to shower as long as the shower water is not copiously running onto your eyelid incision lines. You can also use a face cloth to wash your face rather than splashing your face with water to clean it.

- Eyelid skin tends to heal well over time without noticeable scarring, but that is a risk of surgery and something we monitor you for post-operatively. Scars can "re-model" - soften, flatten and lighten - over 6 months to a year.

- Because the eyes are usually more "open" after surgery, vision tends to be brighter and there can be an increased rate of evaporative tear loss. What this means is that eyes can feel drier after eyelid surgery requiring different types of dry eye therapy for relief.

- Another risk of blepharoplasty surgery is a risk of having too much skin removed. While there is a small chance of this happening, if this occurs in the upper eyelids, it may be difficult to close your eyes all the way and can lead to worsening eye dryness. If this occurs after lower eyelid blepharoplasty, you can have downward pulling of the eyelid edge that both leads to dryness and an undesirable cosmetic appearance after surgery.

- While the vast majority of patients feel they have an improved appearance following blepharoplasty and blepharoptosis surgery, there is no guarantee that you or your friends/family will like your postoperative appearance. There is also no guarantee that eyelid surgery will make you happy or feel better about yourself.

- Blepharoptosis surgery is a little bit finicky overall. If you need this procedure to improve vision, the highest overall risk of an undesirable outcome from surgery comes from this portion. If there is only a slight difference in the height or shape between the 2 eyes, we all have facial asymmetry and that has to be tolerated. However, if there is a significant over or under correction causing too much eye dryness or not improving vision enough, you may need to have a less extensive revision surgery performed to either further elevate or lower the affected eyelid(s).

- Vision may be blurry for a few days to several weeks after eyelid surgery. The most common reason is due to the post-operative ointment getting into the eyes and tears. Occasionally, patients experience either a temporary or permanent shift in their astigmatic refractive error that may require a change in glasses or contact lens prescription 8-10 weeks after surgery. The risk of double vision is very low and more of a risk after lower eyelid blepharoplasty. The risk of blindness after eyelid surgery is very low and one estimate is 0.04%. Risks are higher after eyelid surgery where fat pocket removal is performed. Reports of blindness have typically been a result of internal eyelid

bleeding that occurs over the first 48 hours after surgery. With enough bleeding, the eyelids can become very tense with a blood clot pushing on the optic nerve. Anyone experiencing symptoms of vision becoming dim or dark after eyelid surgery needs to contact the emergency numbers right away.

- Because there is a risk of blindness after eyelid surgery linked to bleeding, we try to have patients withhold as many over-the-counter and prescription supplements and medications that are known to cause easy bleeding. We like to have you stop these medications at least 2 weeks before your surgery date, but we ask you to counsel your prescribing provider regarding the safety of doing such.

- Blepharoplasty and blepharoptosis surgery are the most common surgeries performed by oculoplastic surgeons. Most patients do very well, tend to heal quickly and are surprised how little discomfort they have following surgery.

- Most patients are pleased with the improvement in vision they experience or in an improved cosmetic appearance. However, these outcomes are NOT guaranteed. Please feel free to ask Dr. Torabi any additional questions you might have.