

enhancing your eyes

by Lorri Cobbins, M.D.

Over 10 million cosmetic procedures, both surgical and nonsurgical, were performed in the United States in 2008. The leading procedure was breast augmentation, followed by liposuction. Eyelid surgery, or blepharoplasty, was the third most common procedure performed among men and women.

Cosmetic eyelid surgery removes the excess fat or wrinkled skin of the upper and/or lower eyelids that may give a tired, angry, or sad appearance to the face. Blepharoplasty also improves the appearance of bags or puffiness of the lower lids by tightening the lower eyelid skin to create a smooth, rested, and rejuvenated appearance of the area immediately surrounding the eyes. Adult men and women who have sagging upper eyelid skin, sometimes impairing vision, can benefit from this procedure, as well as those who have inherited traits causing them to seek treatment at an earlier age such as in their 20s or 30s.

Blepharoplasty is typically performed in an outpatient setting under intravenous sedation or general anesthesia. The specific technique utilized by the plastic surgeon for upper eyelid surgery depends on your specific anatomy, such as the position of the eyebrow, amount of excess fat or skin, and the condition of the muscle around your eyes. Whatever your anatomy, incisions follow the natural contours of the upper eyelid skin, and extend slightly beyond the outer corner of the eyelid into an existing crease or laugh line. This design ensures a well-concealed scar when healed. The lower eyelid incision is made just below the lash line to allow for removal of excess lower eyelid skin or fat, and/or redistribution of fat to eliminate puffiness, bags, and bulges. In specific cases, which require removal or redistribution of excess fat of the lower eyelid alone, an incision is placed inside the lower eyelid, with no external incision necessary. In cases of excess skin removal, however, this incision cannot be utilized.

The benefits of blepharoplasty include brighter appearance to the eyes, better definition of the eyelid and adjacent skin, ease of putting on eye makeup, and an alert and rejuvenated appearance. Incisions fade over the following months and most activities can be resumed in approximately 5-10 days.

Every surgical procedure carries some risk. Common potential complications of blepharoplasty include bleeding, unfavorable scarring, ectropion or rolling of the lower eyelid outward, numbness of skin, skin discoloration, and swelling. Conditions such as high blood pressure,



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thyroid disorders, heart disease, glaucoma, diabetes, allergies, or conditions associated with dry eyes may increase risks associated with eyelid surgery. The decision to have a blepharoplasty – or any cosmetic procedure – is very personal, so be sure to ask questions regarding the risks and benefits of surgery at your consultation. Blepharoplasty can be quite rewarding and is associated with an extremely high level of patient satisfaction.

To learn more about blepharoplasty or other cosmetic and reconstructive plastic surgery procedures, visit Dr. Cobbins' website at www.lorricobbinsmd.com or the American Society of Plastic Surgery website at www.plasticsurgery.org.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR Dr. Lorri Cobbins is a board certified plastic surgeon and member of the prestigious American Society of Plastic Surgeons. She is completely dedicated to her craft and is an expert in cosmetic procedures. She draws on a wide range of experiences to deliver superb results to her patients.

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