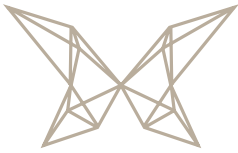


Postoperative Instructions

EYELID SURGERY
(BLEPHAROPLASTY)

Dr Rory Dower



Postoperative Instructions

Eyelid Surgery (Blepharoplasty)

You have undergone a surgical procedure in a day clinic setting and will spend some time in recovery, before being discharged home. If this procedure is combined with other procedures, you may require an overnight stay. It is important for you to arrange to have either a friend or family member drive you home and stay with you for the first 24 - 48 hours.

What to Expect

IMMEDIATELY AFTER SURGERY

- Despite feeling tired and sore for a few days, you should be up and about the day after surgery
- Maximum discomfort will occur in the first few days. This may include a gritty sensation in the eyes
- For the first few weeks, you may experience excessive tearing, sensitivity to light, and double or blurred vision. Wearing sunglasses whilst outdoors will help alleviate this.
- You will have bruising and swelling around the eyes and at first, they will feel tight. This usually peaks at around day 3 to 4. The bruising and tightness will usually settle in 10-14 days. Swelling takes longer to settle and the majority of the swelling will have resolved by 3-4 weeks. You should try to sit upright as much as possible to help the swelling reduce faster.
- Sometimes it may be that the pain and swelling are limited mainly to one side. This should not alarm you as healing can proceed differently in each side. However, if a great or rapidly changing difference develops between the two sides, please contact Dr. Dower's rooms
- Facial makeup can be applied to cover up bruising 3 days after surgery, but not on the incisions. Please do not wear eye makeup for two weeks
- A large pair of sunglasses helps to conceal any bruising and swelling
- You may experience some numbness of the operative areas. This will usually settle with time

LONG TERM

- A fresher and less tired look
- A fuller, more youthful upper eyelid contour
- A smooth transition from your cheek to lower eyelid, giving a more youthful appearance

Medication and Handling pain

- Following surgery, cold cooling pads are applied to reduce swelling and discomfort for the first couple of hours
- Once you are at home, rest quietly and apply cold compresses to the eyes for 15-20 minutes of every hour that you are awake for the first 3 days after surgery. This is easily done by taking eye pads and moistening them, before putting them in the refrigerator. Once cold, they are then applied over the eyelids
- Please DO NOT apply ice directly to the skin as this may cause a burn, especially where you have decreased sensation
- Use artificial tears throughout the day, whenever your eyes feel dry or scratchy
- Use ophthalmic ointment every night for the first 3 weeks after surgery or until all signs of eye irritation have gone
- You may recommence your normal medication the day after surgery unless otherwise advised
- Take pain medication as prescribed.
- In order to "break" the pain cycle, we recommend taking the pain meds regularly, as prescribed, for the first 3 days, even if discomfort is only mild
- Do not take aspirin or any products containing aspirin for the week following surgery, unless this is for a medical condition, in which case please discuss this with Dr Dower
- Do not drink alcohol when taking pain medication

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Wound Care, Stitches, Dressings And Drains

- Sutures are removed at around 5-7 days
- Do not rub eyes or attempt to remove any crusts
- If you feel the eye requires cleaning, use cooled boiled water from the kettle. Wash your hands first and use a cotton pad to dip and gently wipe with the cooled boiled water, from the nose side outwards to the outside of your face

Contact lenses and Glasses

- Contact lenses should NOT be worn for at least two weeks, as this may disturb the wound
- You may wear glasses straight away, being careful to avoid contact with the wound

Showering and Bathing

- You may shower after 48 hours
- Please pat the areas around the incisions dry and do not wipe
- No bathing or soaking the incision site for the first 2 weeks

Sleeping

- If you have had eyelid surgery alone, use an extra pillow when sleeping, to keep the head elevated and reduce the swelling
- If you have also had a facelift, sleep flat on your back without a pillow for 10 days, in order to 'open up the neck' and allow the skin to drape properly. This avoids bunching of the skin below the chin, which may compromise your final result. In general, this principle should be followed throughout the day, whether resting, watching TV or reading a book. If more comfortable, you may use a small cylindrical neck roll when lying down. After 10 days, you may sleep with your normal pillows
- Due to the fact that there is likely to be some degree of soiling of your wounds, try to use old linen in case this gets stained

Level of Activity and Exercise

- Start walking as soon as possible after surgery to reduce the risk of blood clots in your lower legs
- Although you can gently walk about and do light duties for the first 7-10 days, please avoid activities that increase blood flow to your head. This includes straining, bending over or lifting heavy objects. To pick something up from the floor, lower yourself down by bending your knees rather than leaning forward
- You may read or watch television after 2-3 days
- You may choose to return to work after 7-10 days
- You may resume light exercises at around 2 weeks and your normal exercise routine at around 3 weeks
- Body contact sports should be avoided for 6-8 weeks
- Resume sexual activity as comfort permits, usually 2-3 weeks post-operatively
- Do not drive until you are no longer taking narcotic pain medication and have normal vision
- If you are doing something that is causing you pain, this is usually the body's natural warning system to take it easy and not over exert yourself

Smoking and Alcohol

- Avoid smoking for the first 4 weeks after surgery as smoking delays healing and increases the risk of complications
- Avoid alcohol for at least 72 hours after surgery, as this may increase your risk of bleeding

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Diet

- Everyone recovers from their anesthetic differently. Some people feel no side effects while others are more noticeably affected, feeling tired and even sick for the first couple of days
- Eat lightly with small meals throughout the day to minimize sickness
- Drink plenty of fluids in the form of water and fresh juices, in the first few days after surgery
- Avoid caffeine and carbonated drinks for the first few days

Scar Management

- A scar takes 9-12 months to reach full maturity at which stage the final result will be evident.
- The scars may become a little more pink and noticeable, even red and lumpy temporarily before they start to improve.
- Avoid exposing scars to sun for at least 12 months. Always use a strong sunblock, if sun exposure is unavoidable (SPF 50 or greater)
- Scar science can be used to improve the appearance of the scar. You can start applying this from 6 weeks post-operatively. For the first 2-6 weeks of treatment, the cream should be applied over the Micropore tape. After this, it can be applied directly to the scar. For the scar science to have a beneficial effect, it should be used for a period of at least 6 months from the date of surgery. After 1 year the scar has reached maturity and there is no further benefit
- If not using scar science, you can apply Micropore tape to the incisions for 6 months, changing this every 7 to 10 days. Do not remove the tape every day as it will cause irritation of the surrounding skin. Incision areas may be massaged over the Micropore tape to help improve the scar
- Local massage to the scar is usually begun at around 4 weeks. Use your normal body lotion creams or Bio-Oil to facilitate this action
- Do not use any creams containing Vitamin E to treat the incision areas for the first 3 months

When should I call?

- Fresh bleeding, other than that of a minor nature
- Pain not relieved by pain relieving tablets
- Sudden onset new and worsening pain
- Excessive swelling or redness
- Increased redness along the incision sites
- Discharge or foul odour from the incision sites
- Fever of 38 degrees Celsius or above
- Any side effects to medications; such as, rash, nausea, headache or vomiting
- Increased pain in your calves, shortness of breath, or chest pain

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBER: +27 (0)82 876 1097