

Vinod K. Anand, MD, FACS

PLASTIC SURGERY OF THE EYELIDS, EYEBROWS AND FOREHEAD

Blepharoplasty and Forehead Lift

This brochure will familiarize you with some basic facts about cosmetic surgery of the upper face, including the eyelids, eyebrows and forehead. It will give you enough general background to make you an "educated consumer." Your facial plastic surgeon will explain how these procedures apply to an individual's condition.

COMMON PROBLEMS

We do not always look as good or as young as we feel. Heredity, skin abuse, and over-exposure to the sun can eventually cause our temples, eyebrows and forehead to relax or descend. Loose skin may develop around our upper and lower eyelids, as well as fatty deposits, which can cause bulging and protrusions.

The result can be a tired and sad look and, when particularly pronounced, even an angry look. Fortunately, cosmetic facial procedures can correct many of these problems.

SOME SOLUTIONS

Eyelid problems are corrected by an operation called blepharoplasty. And brow and forehead lifts do a great deal to alleviate drooping eyebrows and wrinkling of the forehead. In fact, in many cases, proper treatment of the brows and forehead is essential to the overall treatment of the upper part of the face.

Blepharoplasty is performed on both the upper and lower eyelids to remove skin and protruding fatty tissue. In both operations, incisions are made in the natural skin folds of the eyelids, making them virtually unnoticeable after they are healed.

Often, a problem with excessive upper eyelid skin is accentuated by the relaxation of the eyebrows and forehead. When this is the case, an operation to elevate the brows and, perhaps, even the forehead is in order. The direct or mid-forehead brow lift is designed to remove skin just above the brows and to elevate the muscles around the eyes to improve drooping of the brows themselves. This operation is most successful with men since they usually have numerous forehead wrinkles in which to hide the resulting scars. It is used infrequently with women, and only with those who have considerable forehead wrinkling. However, many women now are having an operation that both elevates the brows and diminishes forehead wrinkles and frown lines. This procedure is called a forehead lift, and is performed through an incision hidden behind the hairline. The forehead and brows are elevated and the excess skin is removed from behind the hairline, completely hiding the scar.

All of these procedures can be done alone or in combination with a facelift or other facial surgery.

DECIDING ON AN OPERATION

Anyone interested in cosmetic surgery of the eyelids, eyebrows or forehead should consult a competent facial plastic surgeon. During the initial visit, the surgeon makes a thorough evaluation of the facial features to determine whether surgery is indicated. The surgeon then will discuss any questions and concerns related to the surgery.

In addition to the skill of the surgeon, the patient's realistic expectations about the results of the surgery and his general emotional state are important considerations. Mental attitude is as important as the ability to heal in evaluating candidates for facial plastic surgery.

Once surgery is agreed upon, pre-operative photographs are taken to help the surgeon plan the operation. These photographs usually are compared with similar ones taken sometime after surgery and serve as a permanent before-and-after record of the results.

WHERE SURGERY IS PERFORMED

The operation can be performed in a hospital, an ambulatory surgical care center or an office surgery center, depending on the patient's and the physician's preference. It can be performed safely on an out-patient surgical basis, but the physician may recommend a short stay in the hospital.

KEEPING THE PATIENT COMFORTABLE

Pre-operative medications to relieve tension and local anesthetics to numb the facial area during surgery commonly are administered. These should keep the patient comfortable and free of pain during the operation. If desired, a general anesthesia can be administered.

THE IMMEDIATE AFTER-EFFECTS

After the operation, some swelling and bruising of the eyelids can be expected. The swelling usually subsides within the first few days, and the bruising subsides within two to three weeks. There may be mild discomfort for a short time after surgery, but this usually is controlled easily with medication. Significant pain is quite rare. Sutures are removed a few days after surgery, and make-up can be applied shortly thereafter.

THE RESULTS TO EXPECT

With the elimination of excessive sagging skin and fat around the eyelids and/or elevation of the brows, the patient should have a more rested and youthful appearance. Just how much improvement will be made depends on the individual's physical characteristics and the extent of the surgery.

THE RISKS

The risks are minimal. There are inherent risks in any surgical undertaking, however, and these should be discussed thoroughly with your facial plastic surgeon. Many thousands of successful eyelid operations are performed each year.

THE COSTS

Fees for cosmetic surgery and operative facilities vary widely and depend on the extent and complexity of the surgery as well as on the individual surgeon. Your facial plastic surgeon

and his staff will discuss costs before the operation. Fees for cosmetic surgery generally are expected in advance of the surgery because this type of surgery usually is not covered by insurance. If the purpose of cosmetic surgery is to correct functional impairment, an insurance company may allow partial payment. The best way to find out if a claim will be considered is to consult an insurance company representative in advance of the operation.

FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY
AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FACIAL PLASTIC
AND RECONSTRUCTIVE SURGERY, INC
1110 Vermont Avenue, N.W., Suite 220
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 842-4500

The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (AAFPRS), is the world's largest association of facial plastic surgeons—those physicians performing cosmetic and reconstructive surgery of the face, head, and neck. The Academy's bylaws provide that AAFPRS fellows be board-certified surgeons with training and experience in facial plastic surgery and be fellows of the American College of Surgeons or the Royal College of Surgeons.

Persons contemplating facial plastic surgery can receive information about such surgery and the name of AAFPRS fellows in their area who have chosen to participate in the Facial Plastic Surgery Information Service, Inc, by calling that service at 800-332-FACE (in the U.S.), 800-523-FACE (in Canada), 842-4500 (in Washington, D.C).

AAFPRS 1991