

OPHTHALMOLOGY

Eyelids and eyebags explained

Your questions on the quest for striking eyes answered.



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What are the most popular aesthetic eye surgeries in Singapore?

There are three procedures, namely, double eyelid surgery, upper lid blepharoplasty and lower lid blepharoplasty.

About 50% of Asians do not have double eyelids. The oriental shape makes them appear smaller than they are, leading many women and men to seek ways to make their eyes look “brighter” and more youthful. Our skin also loses elasticity and moisture as we age, and this means wrinkles and sagging skin which can result in protruding fat around the eyes and unsightly “eyebags”. Older patients often want to have this droopy skin and fat removed.

How is it done and how long is recovery time?

Double eyelid surgery. The method depends on the thickness of the eyelid skin and whether there is excess skin or fat. If the patient is young with no excess skin or fat, a simple suture method, where a stitch is threaded in and out of the eyelid to create the natural crease, is performed. There is also the small incision method, where three small cuts are made in the eyelid to put special stitches into the tissues underneath the skin to create the double eyelid. These methods have a shorter recovery period but there is a risk of losing the double fold over time. There is some swelling which takes about a week to settle.

The last method for double eyelid creation is the traditional one; a strip of skin is removed and stitches placed to anchor the skin to the muscle that lifts the eyelid. This method works for patients with excess skin or fat. It takes about half an hour with a little more swelling.

Upper lid blepharoplasty is similar to the traditional method for double eyelid surgery. These patients are usually older with more excess skin or fat, and an additional stitch can be placed internally to hitch the eyebrow up for a lifting effect.

Lower lid blepharoplasty or “eyebag” surgery can be done internally or externally


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depending on the patient’s age and whether there is excess skin. Younger patients benefit from the internal method where the fat is removed through a cut on the inner surface of the eyelid. This surgery is relatively quick with a shorter recovery period than the external method, which involves a cut just beneath the lower eyelid lashes. The bulging fat is repositioned to fill in the hollows and even out protruding areas. The recovery time from this surgery is about one to two weeks.

How have the techniques improved and how do these improve outcomes?

In the past, we adopted the western techniques and concept of beauty in our assessment of our patients. Today, we have evolved to include Asian techniques to enhance natural Asian features. We have also shifted towards retaining the original fat and using it as a natural filler to fill in the sunken areas through repositioning of the fat. This prevents patients from looking hollowed and sunken in the long run and greatly enhances the long-term results. 

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