

What is blepharoplasty?

 bodyandsoul.com.au/houseofwellness/what-you-need-to-know-about-blepharoplasty/news-story/27963213aad75053d925cf24a984ec5c

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Image: Pexels

Considering eyelid surgery? Whether for cosmetic reasons or to improve vision, blepharoplasty is one of the most common facial procedures in Australia. Here's what you need to know before booking in.

Whether your goal is to improve your vision or achieve a more [refreshed appearance](#), blepharoplasty – or eyelid surgery – is a popular facial procedure in Australia.

Here's the lowdown on what the procedure involves, when it might be medically necessary and the risks worth knowing about.

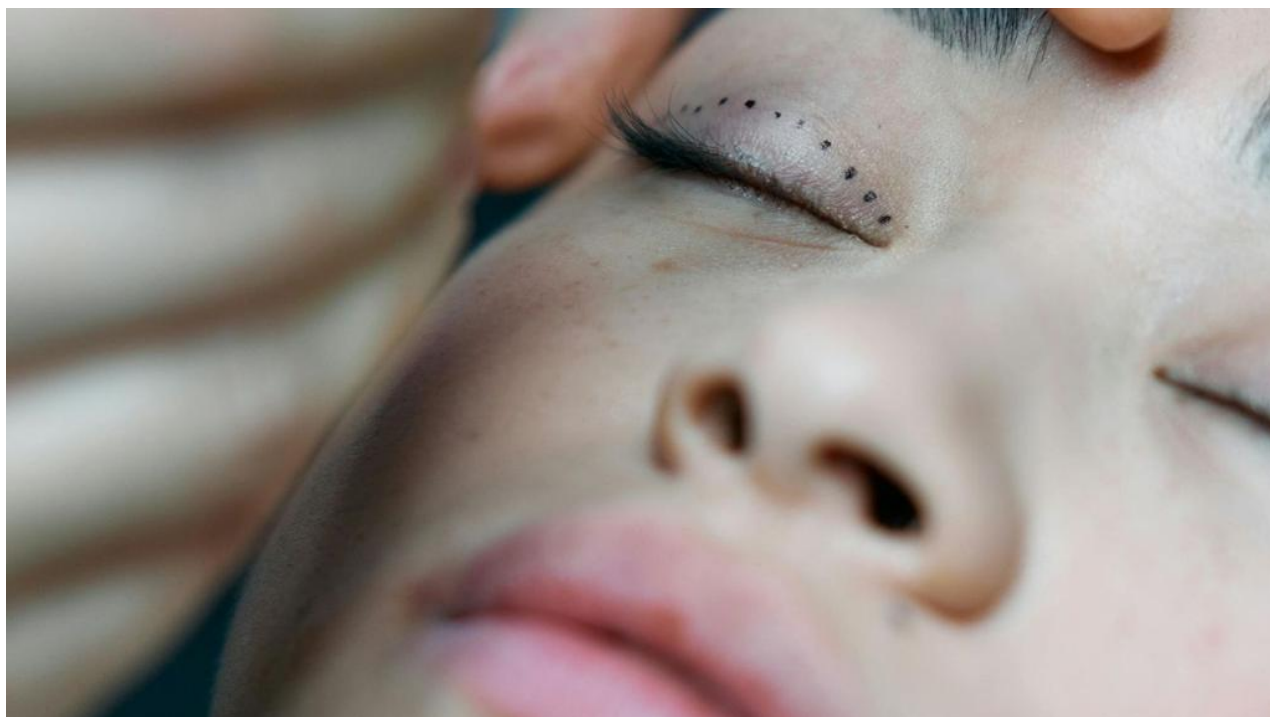
Blepharoplasty is surgery on the eyelids to [remove or reposition](#) excess skin, fat or muscle.

Sydney-based plastic surgeon Dr Pouria Moradi explains that upper blepharoplasty typically means simply removing excess eyelid skin, while lower blepharoplasty involves removing skin or tightening tissue and redistributing the fat cushion underneath.

“Addressing both elements allows for a smoother appearance to the lower eyelid,” Dr Moradi says.

Facial plastic surgeon Dr Joel Kopelman, of Kopelman Aesthetic Surgery in New York, describes upper eyelid blepharoplasty as targeting “sagging skin that can droop over the lash line or create a heavy, hooded appearance”.

On the other hand, lower eyelid surgery focuses on “puffiness, under-eye bags and loose or wrinkled skin”, Dr Kopelman says.



Cosmetic blepharoplasty reduces heaviness and sagging to create a more youthful, rested appearance. Image: Pexels

Cosmetic v functional blepharoplasty

While some people choose blepharoplasty for cosmetic reasons, others require it for medical reasons.

According to New York-based double board-certified plastic surgeon Dr Sam Rizk, cosmetic blepharoplasty reduces heaviness and sagging to create a more [youthful, rested appearance](#).

However, when excess upper eyelid skin physically obstructs vision (a condition called dermatochalasis) the surgery becomes functional rather than aesthetic.

Dr Kopelman says some patients come in thinking they're getting the procedure done for cosmetic reasons, only to learn that their vision has also been impaired as the drooping skin is actually limiting their peripheral vision.

This means the procedure can simultaneously restore both function and appearance.

From a regulatory perspective, Dr Moradi explains that in Australia only upper eyelid blepharoplasty qualifies as medically necessary, and only when excess skin sits on the eyelashes and demonstrably affects vision as documented by an optometrist.

Lower eyelid surgery remains classified as cosmetic.

What to expect during recovery

How quickly you bounce back after surgery depends on whether you've had the upper or lower eyelids, or both areas, treated, and how well your body handles healing.

"Upper eyelid surgery typically takes about an hour under local anaesthetic, while lower eyelid surgery takes around two hours and requires general anaesthetic," Dr Moradi says.

Experts say both surgeries are day-only procedures, and bruising and swelling tend to resolve within two to four weeks.

Most patients allow seven to 10 days away from work or events to heal.

"Swelling and bruising are most noticeable in the first week," Dr Kopelman says, advising the use of cold compresses and keeping the head elevated to reduce inflammation.

While post-operative discomfort is often mild, recovery experiences can differ and some patients may experience more significant symptoms.

Dr Rizk says average recovery time from blepharoplasty is about "a week and camera-ready in about two".

He also advises avoiding heavy lifting, bending, strenuous activity or wearing make-up and contact lenses for at least two weeks post-surgery.



As with any surgery, blepharoplasty comes with risks. Image: Pexels

What are the risks of blepharoplasty?

As with any surgery, blepharoplasty comes with risks, and while they're generally rare, it's important to know what you're signing up for.

Possible side effects [include](#) bleeding, infection, dry or watery eyes and temporarily blurred vision, but more serious complications can occur, especially around the eye.

"Unique eyelid-surgery risks include drooping of the eyelid margin (ectropion), injury to the eye and, in very rare cases, blindness," Dr Moradi says.

Poor eyelid tone can increase the risk of ectropion.

"Ensuring natural results with preserved eye shape is a priority," Dr Kopelman says, emphasising the importance of a careful preoperative assessment.

What does blepharoplasty cost in Australia?

Dr Moradi says the cost of both cosmetic and medically necessary blepharoplasty typically range from \$4,000 to \$12,000 AUD.

He explains that only upper eyelid surgery may be covered by Medicare if it is deemed medically necessary, which means the excess skin must sit on the eyelashes and affect the visual field – which must be assessed and documented by an optometrist.

Dr Moradi also notes that in New South Wales, even medically necessary upper blepharoplasty cannot be performed in a public hospital.

Lower eyelid surgery is considered purely cosmetic and is not covered by Medicare, he emphasises.

Coverage and pricing for blepharoplasty procedures varies depending on individual clinical assessment and should be discussed with a qualified healthcare provider.

Does blepharoplasty hurt?

Here's some reassuring news: The experts say post-operative discomfort is usually mild.

"Most patients only need over-the-counter pain relief for the first day or two, managing soreness effectively with rest and cold packs," Dr Rizk says.

Bruising and inflammation are more common than pain, and tend to subside quickly.



Blepharoplasty isn't permanent, but its effects can be long-lasting. Image: Pexels



[Can't sleep? Here's why perimenopause could be to blame](#)

Blepharoplasty isn't permanent, but its effects can be long-lasting.

"Results last around 10 years," Dr Moradi says.

However, Drs Rizk and Kopelman say some patients report results lasting 10-15 years, with outcomes varying depending on individual factors such as genetics and lifestyle.

Will it alter the shape of your eyes?

Although blepharoplasty adjusts eyelid contour, when performed conservatively it should not dramatically reshape the eye.

“The procedure may change eye shape if issues are severe,” Dr Moradi notes.

But Dr Rizk emphasises that his approach prioritises preserving natural volume while subtly contouring the area to rejuvenate the eye, not transform it.

Can you wear make-up after eyelid surgery?

Avoiding [eye make-up](#) and contact lenses during early recovery is important for proper healing.

“I recommend waiting until stitches are removed (usually around Day 5) to reduce the risk of infection or irritation,” Dr Rizk says.

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