

the eye opener

Lise Petersen spoke with Gold Coast cosmetic doctor **Dr John Flynn** about the main options for rejuvenating the eye area.

According to Gold Coast cosmetic doctor Dr John Flynn, eyelid surgery is one of the most commonly requested procedures. “The eyes are important because they reflect people’s state of health and wellbeing, and it is also the features around the eye area that give this impression,” he says. “But there is no one thing that is going to solve all eye problems. A good cosmetic practice should be able to offer the right combination of treatments to match the individual’s concerns or requirements. For example, surgery is used to lift, tighten or reposition tissues but a superior result will be achieved if skin quality issues are attended to through proper skincare.”

Surgical options

Upper eyelids

The major issue with the upper eyelids is redundant skin in the upper lid which, in extreme cases, can be sufficient to actually obscure vision, explains Dr Flynn. “In fact there is a Medicare rebate if this excess skin does actually obscure a patient’s vision,” he says. “The test for this is to check whether the upper eyelids sit on the eyelashes in a straight-ahead gaze.”

Removing just this extra skin is a fairly straightforward

procedure, but achieving a good cosmetic outcome also requires close attention to detail. “The upper eyelids can’t be considered in isolation from the eyebrow because the eyebrow contributes to the cosmetic appearance of heaviness in the upper lids. For this reason surgical attention to the eyebrow position may also be required,” says Dr Flynn. “I explain to my patients how important it is to distinguish between the brow elements and the lid elements.”

With upper eyelid surgery, the incision scars are placed in the eyelid crease, making them inconspicuous. Brow elevation need not involve any visible scars either because they can be hidden in the hairline. Another option – the new filament lifts – can be also be adapted to elevate and reposition the brow.

Both upper eyelid surgery and brow elevation are day surgery procedures, performed either with a general or twilight anaesthetic. Sutures are removed within seven days and although bruising may take a little longer to resolve, full recovery takes two weeks.

Lower eyelids

The lower eyelids are much more challenging from a surgical point of view. The important issues here are loose

skin, bagging or prolapsing of fat, and the hollow eye trough. "Any combination of these can be seen in any given patient," explains Dr Flynn. "There are two important considerations in relation to this surgery: you can't take out too much fat because this can make a hollow eye look worse, and you can't take out too much skin because this can cause the eyelid to drop down and cause a round-eye effect. Also if the orbital septum (the restraining layer of tissue under the eye) is loose it may need to be specifically tightened.

In the same way that the upper eyelids need to be considered in conjunction with the eyebrow, the lower lids need to be viewed in relation to the cheek (the malar, or mid-face area). "The cheek is significant to the lower eyelid," says Dr Flynn, "because as the face ages, the cheeks drop and lose fullness. This pulls the lower eyelid down, leaving a tired, drawn effect. Therefore in some patients it is required to elevate or otherwise restore the cheek contour. This can be done with a mid-face lift (a malar elevation), or the cheek pads can be augmented with a fat transfer or other dermal fillers, such as Aquamid, Newfill, Hylaform or Restylane."

If fat only is being removed from the lower eyelid, the scar can be placed inside the eyelid so it is not visible. If the skin is being removed or the septum tightened, then the scar is situated just under the eyelash line, so that it is inconspicuous.

As with upper eyelid surgery, lower eyelid surgery is also a day surgery procedure, performed either with a general or a twilight anaesthetic. Sutures are removed within seven days. Bruising may take a little longer to resolve and full recovery takes two weeks.

Nonsurgical alternatives

Upper eyelids

"Basically, anything that is going to firm and refine the skin will help with the eye area," explains Dr Flynn. "This is particularly so with crow's feet because the skin in this area is finer and so is able to be rejuvenated more easily, especially using Botox. The thinner skin of both upper and lower lids doesn't respond quite as well to treatments such as microdermabrasion and peels but laser resurfacing is very useful for tightening the skin. The right

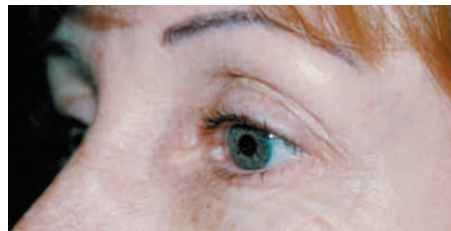
difference between male & female brows

There is a distinction between what procedures a surgeon would perform for a woman or a man. "Females typically have a higher brow position that is finer and more arched. Most women also try to achieve elevation of the outer, or lateral, part of the brow for an elegant look," explains Dr Flynn. "Male brows tend to have a lower overall position. They are straighter, thicker and don't have the lateral elevation. If surgeons approach the male brow the same way as the female brow then they are going to create an inappropriate feminised or surprised look. It is important for surgeons to keep this in mind."

cosmeceuticals can also make a difference as can newer, innovative uses of Hylaform and Botox, which can be used to shape and elevate the brow."

Lower eyelids

Again, microdermabrasion and peels are not as effective here as elsewhere in the face but laser resurfacing is very useful. Dermal fillers such as Hylaform, Newfill, Restylane and the new Isolagen are also excellent for filling wrinkles and the hollow eye trough. Botox is a very effective treatment for squinting eyes. **acsm**



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AFTER blepharoplasty by Dr Flynn. Lower eyelids can be tricky, but certainly brighten the whole outlook. In this case the upper lids have not been done



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AFTER blepharoplasty by Dr Flynn. Eye area rejuvenation gives a brighter look and can make the eyes look larger