

eyes

eye for beauty

Sydney plastic surgeon **Dr Warwick Nettle** discusses how blepharoplasty can create more youthful-looking eyes. Kirsty Doolan reports.

The area around the eyes is one of the biggest indicators of an ageing face, so it's not surprising that blepharoplasty, or eyelid surgery, is a commonly requested procedure, says Sydney plastic surgeon Dr Warwick Nettle.

'Most candidates for this operation tend to be women over the age of 30 who feel their eyes are making them look older than their years,' says Dr Nettle. 'They generally have concerns about sagging skin, excess fat, wrinkles and bags around the eyes and a blepharoplasty seeks to address these issues.'

'This type of surgery has significantly improved in the past five years. Previously there was generally one standardised operation that altered rather than rejuvenated the appearance of the eyes, but now the procedure can be completely customised to the individual,' he says.

Dr Nettle believes beautiful eyes have three things in common: 'First, the distance between the pupil and the eyebrow should be greater than the distance between the pupil and the lower lid cheek junction/tear duct. Second, the most central part of the eyelid should be the same height as the lateral corner or higher. Finally, the upper lid should be full with a soft yet defined eyelid crease and show 3 to 4mm of the lid.'

The dynamics between the eyelid and the brow should also be considered, says Dr Nettle. 'In some cases, an eyebrow lift can be performed as an alternative to eyelid surgery for people with a low eyebrow.'

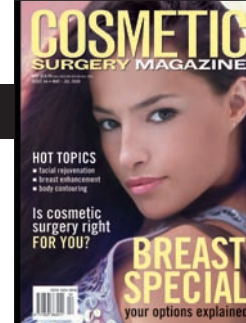
When performing lower eyelid surgery to diminish the

appearance of bags of fat on the lower eyelid, Dr Nettle says there are generally three options: 'The first is to surgically remove the fat bags. The second is to reposition the fat to where it would have been originally. The third option is to remove fat from the bags to fill in the tear trough and create a more youthful appearance.'

'Blepharoplasty seeks to address sagging skin, excess fat, wrinkles and bags around the eyes'

A deep tear trough under the eye is one of the signs of ageing and this can also be rejuvenated to restore a more aesthetically pleasing look. 'To correct a deep tear trough, the underlying muscle can be lifted and reattached to the orbital rim,' says Dr Nettle. 'This has only become a more common practice in the past 10 years and I believe it has been a breakthrough in blepharoplasty procedures.'

'To combat loose, excess or wrinkled lower eyelid skin, a 1950s technique called "pinch blepharoplasty" has been adopted but given a modern twist,' he explains. 'With this method, the surgeon gently pinches the excess skin under the eye and only removes the redundant skin. I find this technique allows for more controlled wound healing and predictable recovery. The incision lines are normally virtually imperceptible after the surgery.'



BEFORE



AFTER eyelid surgery by Dr Nettle



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When undergoing eyelid surgery patients can usually return to work a week and a half after the procedure. Typical side effects can include temporary bruising, swelling and blurred vision from the ointment used during the surgery.

Results of eyelid surgery are generally long-lasting, however the procedure will not stop the natural ageing process and the eyes will continue to age with time.

For those who want to improve the look of their eyes without surgery there are options available. 'Having thick, long eyelashes can play an important role in achieving beautiful eyes,' says Dr Nettle. 'An eye drop to make eyelashes appear thicker and longer is now available for those who desire more lustrous lashes. Originally used as an eye drop for Glaucoma sufferers, doctors discovered

patients' eyelashes grew longer from using it. As a result, it is starting to be used cosmetically to create longer, healthier looking lashes.'

Botox can also give the eye area a more youthful and rejuvenated look. 'Some under-eye wrinkles extend into the crow's feet, and Botox in this area can help to diminish the appearance of these wrinkles,' Dr Nettle says.

Surgeons are increasingly looking for ways to work with the natural structure of the face to rejuvenate rather than alter a patient's appearance. 'I believe this push towards natural-looking facial rejuvenation is important,' says Dr Nettle. 'We are not performing these procedures mechanically, but are seeking to enhance a patient's natural beauty and achieve natural-looking results.' **acsm**