

Cosmetic Eyelid Surgery

An introduction to the procedures available, patient results, expectations, and recovery



This whitepaper is presented by M. Azhar Ali, M.D. F.A.C.S., of Amae Plastic Surgery in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. The following information about blepharoplasty, most commonly referred to as an eye lift procedure or cosmetic eyelid surgery, is intended to be informational and introductory.

We strongly advise that anyone looking to have an eye lift, or a cosmetic surgery of any kind, schedules a professional consultation with a plastic surgeon that is board-certified by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons.

For more specific information on cosmetic eyelid surgery, or to schedule an immediate consultation with Dr. Ali, please contact us.

About Dr. Ali

Dr. Ali is a board-certified plastic surgeon powerfully motivated to help patients restore their self-confidence, emotional health, and beauty. He has successfully pursued the art of blepharoplasty in addition to many other cosmetic surgery procedures for the head and face including facelifts, neck lifts, nose reshaping, brow lifts, cheek implants, chin implants, ear surgery, facial reconstruction and hair transplants. Additional cosmetic surgeries available at Amae Plastic Surgery include liposuction, breast reconstruction, reduction and augmentation, tummy tucks, arm lifts and various non-surgical skin treatments.

Dr. Ali is continually rated a top doctor by patients on sites such as Vitals.com and Healthgrades. His reputation among other plastic surgeons is strong; his peers have selected him as one of Hour Detroit's Top Docs.

Dr. Ali has extensive training and experience in plastic surgery procedures. Following his medical schooling, he engaged in 11 years of additional training, including but not limited to:

- Fellowship in Aesthetic and Reconstructive Breast Surgery at Women's College Hospital in Toronto
- Fellowship in Microsurgery and Trauma at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto
- 1 year fellowship at Children's Hospital in Toronto, Canada for Pediatric Surgery
- 2 years of plastic surgery at Providence Hospital
- 5 years of general surgery training at Providence and North Oakland hospitals in Michigan
- 1 year pediatric internship in New York

In addition to education and training, Dr. Ali belongs to numerous professional organizations including the American College of Surgeons, American Society of Plastic Surgeons, American Medical Society, Michigan State Medical Society, and Oakland County Medical Society.

Introduction: What is Cosmetic Eyelid Surgery?

Blepharoplasty, most commonly referred to among patients as cosmetic eyelid surgery or an “eye lift,” is a surgical procedure that improves the appearance of the upper eyelids, lower eyelids or both.

Cosmetic eyelid surgery gives patients a rejuvenated appearance to the surrounding area of the eyes by reducing the wrinkling and/or bulging of the eyelid tissue. The end result is a more rested and alert appearance.

Am I a Candidate for an Upper and/or Lower Eyelid Procedure?

Cosmetic eyelid surgery is usually done for cosmetic reasons, but it’s also an effective way to improve sight in older patients. Some individuals have upper eyelids that have significantly sagged over time and actually obstruct their vision.

Nearly all individuals experience bulging and wrinkling around the eyes as they age. Fat found between the skin and the skull cushions the eyeballs, but as we age our skin loses its elasticity and gravity causes excess skin and fat to be relocated to different portions of the upper and lower eyelids.

Because this is a result of aging, upper and lower eyelid procedures are most often performed on male and female patients over the age of 35 who have healthy facial tissue and realistic goals for improvement. The procedure can also be performed on young patients if baggy eyelids run in the family.

Eyelid surgery can enhance a patient’s appearance and help build self-confidence.

The ideal patient:

- Is in good physical health
- Has no life-threatening illnesses, medical conditions, or eye diseases
- Is a non-smoker
- Is not depressed
- Wants to have surgery for themselves, not someone else
- Has positive, realistic expectations of the outcome

Setting Your Expectations for a Cosmetic Eyelid Surgery

Blepharoplasty is performed to reduce the wrinkling and/or bulging of eyelid tissue. It is not a procedure for eliminating dark circles under the eyes, crow’s feet and other facial wrinkles.

Not all patients need to have both excess skin and excess fat (bags under the eyes) removed. In many cases only one or the other procedure is needed. It’s important to note that every wrinkle and fold of skin around the eyes cannot be removed. For patients seeking drastic or longer lasting results, eyelid lifts can be performed along with other cosmetic procedures such as filler injections or a forehead lift.

Upper eyelid surgery is not permanent and usually lasts 5-7 years, whereas lower eyelid surgery rarely needs to be repeated. Most recently, there have been innovations in eye surgery to preserve and redistribute fat around the eyes rather than just to remove it. This results in less of a hollow, “dome” appearance.

The Popularity of Cosmetic Eyelid Surgery

Many people are self-conscious about the skin surrounding their eyes, as the eye region is the most important aesthetic component of the face. Saggy eyes give a tired, older appearance to the face which can directly affect people's first impressions. Many people do not want to look exhausted or "worn out" when applying for a job or interacting with friends, family, and acquaintances.

Because of blepharoplasty's minimally invasive techniques, advancements, and proven results, eyelid surgery increased four percent in 2012, according to the American Society of Plastic Surgery. It was within the top five surgical procedures alongside breast augmentation, nose reshaping, liposuction and facelifts. 204,000 cosmetic eyelid procedures were performed in 2012 and this number continues to increase each year.

Your Consultation Prior to Surgery

The only way to know for certain if you are a good candidate for eyelid surgery is to schedule a consultation with a plastic surgeon that is board-certified by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons. The board-certified surgeon will perform a thorough evaluation and consultation. The face will be examined, medical history and existing conditions will be reviewed, and a conversation about the desired outcome will occur.

Your doctor will recommend the appropriate course of action, which may not actually include eyelid surgery. Wrinkles and sagging can sometimes be corrected with facial filler injections or non-surgical procedures.

How is Eyelid Surgery Performed?

Upper eyelid surgery begins with an incision at the natural crease of the inside corner of the eye and extends slightly beyond the outside corner into the crow's feet or laugh lines. Excess fatty tissue and skin are removed and the site is closed so that it is well-camouflaged when healed.

For lower eyelid surgery, the incision is usually made just below the lower lashes. Excess fatty tissue, skin and sometimes muscle are removed. When completed, the site is closed to be well-camouflaged. If no skin removal is necessary and only fat removal is desired, the "transconjunctival blepharoplasty" technique is used. In this technique the incision is made on the inside of the eyelid and no external scars are present.

Depending on the scope of the procedure and the individual patient, cosmetic eyelid surgery usually takes between one and two hours. Eyelid incisions are closed with removable or absorbable sutures, skin adhesives or surgical tape and patients go home that same day.

Healing & Recovery

Patients will need to arrange for another person to drive them home after eyelid surgery. It is also recommended to have someone stay and accompany the patient the night of the procedure.

Patients typically experience minimal pain with blepharoplasty. Swelling and bruising of the eyelids varies with each patient and is usually gone within five to ten days, but it is not unusual for the discoloration to last longer before eventually disappearing.

To help minimize some of the symptoms associated with this procedure, patients should sleep with their heads elevated and in a reclined position. Ice cubes or ice packs may be applied and can help minimize the discomfort.

Some patients experience dry eyes in the days following surgery. Eye drops or artificial tears can be used, but be sure to ask your doctor which one will meet your particular needs and not irritate the surgical site.

Work and social activities are usually curtailed for a period of three to ten days following surgery. Driving may be resumed in two to three days and most people are back to desk work after a long weekend of rest. Exercising may be resumed after two to six weeks; each patient and their healing processes are truly unique.

Potential Risks and Complications

As with any surgery, possible complications may arise. However, when performed by a board-certified plastic surgeon, complications and unwanted results from an eye lift are rare. These potential risks and complications include:

- Bleeding
- Blood clots
- Fluid accumulation
- Infection
- Numbness around the eyes
- Anesthesia risks
- Dry eyes (long-lasting)
- Undesired results
- Unfavorable scarring
- Temporary blurred or impaired vision
- Abnormal coloring of the eyelids

Be sure to discuss all of your questions and concerns with your doctor prior to surgery. If you experience any of the abovementioned side effects in the days following surgery, contact your doctor immediately.

Selecting Your Board-Certified Plastic Surgeon

Blepharoplasty is not offered or mastered by every board-certified plastic surgeon. It is for this reason, and the patient's safety, that it is crucial you make sure you are receiving eyelid surgery from a qualified plastic surgeon who meets the following criteria:

Qualifications

- Is the plastic surgeon board-certified in plastic surgery?
- Does the doctor have a board certification document? If so, they will be happy to share it with you.
- Has the doctor had fellowship training? The best plastic surgeons have accomplished fellowship training within their field.

Experience & Track Record

- How long has the doctor been in practice?
- How many eye lift or eyelid surgeries have been performed?
- Do they have before and after pictures of cosmetic eyelid surgeries that they can share with you?
- Do they have previous eyelid surgery patients you can speak with?

Hospital Privileges

- Which hospital is the board-certified plastic surgeon affiliated with? In case of an emergency, it is important that the plastic surgeon is affiliated with a hospital and can continue taking care of you within that hospital. In unfortunate circumstances, some doctors are forced to turn the patient over to the emergency room if there is no relationship with a suitable hospital.

Medical Organization/Continual Involvement

- Is your plastic surgeon part of a credited medical organization? Surgeons that are members of medical organizations tend to be more qualified, because such organizations typically require that the surgeon meet stringent qualifications when it comes to being approved as a member.

Dr. Ali is a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons (ASPS), which is recognized by the American Board of Plastic Surgery (the highest governing board in plastic surgery). As a member of the ASPS, Dr. Ali is held accountable for meeting stringent qualifications, including:

- At least 6 years of training and experience in surgery with at least 3 years of plastic surgery experience
- Certification by The American Board of Plastic Surgery or The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
- Operates only in accredited medical facilities
- Adheres to a strict code of ethics
- Fulfills continuing education requirements including patient safety techniques
- Acts as your partner to work with you to achieve your goals

Don't be afraid to ask:

- Am I really a good candidate for this procedure?
- What will be expected of ME to get the best results?
- Where and how will you perform my procedure?
- What surgical technique is recommended for my individual condition?
- How are complications handled?
- How long of a recovery period can I expect?
- What are my options if I am dissatisfied with the cosmetic outcome?

A skilled, trusted and qualified plastic surgeon will be able to address all of your questions and concerns and will never rush you into a cosmetic procedure of any kind.

The Price of Eyelid Surgery

Health insurance companies typically don't cover cosmetic surgeries. However, if the eyelid surgery is being performed to correct poor vision and a vision test confirms this, an insurance company may cover this particular procedure.

It is recommended to review financials with both the surgeon's practice and the insurance company prior to moving forward with surgery so that you know exactly what your costs are.

If your health care provider has told you that your procedure is not covered, or you would benefit from being able to pay for the procedure over time, Amae Plastic Surgery in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan has several potential financing solutions. For specific details, contact our team at (855) 335-7200.

Summary – A Note from Dr. Ali

The choice to have eyelid surgery is yours to make, and yours only. While this procedure is becoming increasingly popular, it is not the right procedure for everyone and non-surgical solutions may exist.

This whitepaper may serve as an introduction to and overview of blepharoplasty, but no amount of online research is a substitute for a professional consultation with a plastic surgeon who is board-certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgeons. We hope this introduction to blepharoplasty has better informed you, and perhaps even helped you lean toward a particular procedure.

If you decide that blepharoplasty is right for you, or are simply considering it, we strongly encourage you to call Amae Plastic Surgery in Michigan for your initial consultation. We believe that patient education and realistic expectations are the keys to success with any cosmetic surgical procedure and we will take the time to educate you, understand your goals, and provide you with information that allows you to make the best decision regarding your body.

Only trust your board-certified plastic surgeon when it comes to your health and achieving the desired aesthetic outcome for your face.

To your health!

Dr. M. Azhar Ali

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