

Ophthalmology department

# Ectropion (turning out of the lower eyelid) and Entropion (turning in of the lower eyelid)

## Information for patients, relatives and carers

### Introduction

This leaflet has been designed to give you information about ectropion and entropion and answer some of the questions that you or those who care for you may have. It is not meant to replace the discussion between you and your medical team but aims to help you understand more about what is discussed. If you have any questions about the information below, please contact us.

### What is ectropion and entropion?

**Ectropion** is a condition that affects the lower eyelid, causing it to turn outwards. If the lower eyelid is not resting comfortably on the eye, the tears cannot flow into the tear duct, resulting in your eye watering and being sore. The most common cause of ectropion is when the muscles of the eyelid become less elastic due to ageing. However, ectropion may also occur if you have facial palsy (paralysis) or scarring of the eyelids.

**Entropion** is a condition where the eyelid rolls inwards, and the eyelashes rub against the front surface of the eye. This causes the eye to become red, sore and watery. It also increases the risk of infection in the clear front window of the eye (cornea). If left untreated this can cause scarring and long-term visual loss. In the UK the most common cause is when the muscles of the lower eyelid become laxer with age. It can also occur because of scarring from infection or other injuries.

### What treatment is there?

Non-surgical treatments for ectropion can include using lubricating drops when the eye feels gritty and sore.

Non-surgical treatments for entropion can include placing medical tape on the lower eyelid to turn the lashes away from the surface of the eye. Botulinum toxin injections can be used in the lower lid to turn it out. These are not permanent and wear off after a few months.

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Permanent treatment of ectropion and entropion involves a minor operation to turn the lid towards its normal position. The operation usually takes around 30 to 45 minutes and is performed as a day case, so you will not have to stay in hospital overnight.

The procedure is normally done under a local anaesthetic injection to freeze the eyelid. This means you will be awake but will not be able to feel anything. It is also possible to have this with a sedating medicine given into a vein to relax you. The operation is rarely performed while asleep under general anaesthetic.

## Risks of surgery

The operation is a low-risk procedure. It is normal for the eyelid to be bruised and swollen for 1 to 2 weeks after the operation.

The eye can occasionally feel gritty and topical lubricating drops can help with this.

Any scarring is kept to a minimum and the appearance of any scar can be improved with massage.

Rare complications include:

- recurrence of the ectropion or entropion, requiring repeat surgery
- infection

## Follow-up care

A pad will be put on your eye after the operation. This can be removed the following day.

You can then clean your eye – the nursing team will teach you how to do this after the operation.

You may be prescribed drops to put in the eye to keep it comfortable and reduce the chance of an infection.

It is possible to resume light work, such as office work, one week after surgery but it is advisable to wait longer if your work is more active or vigorous.

You will be seen 2 weeks after the surgery. Any sutures (small stitches) will be removed at this visit.

## Who you can contact for more information

If you have questions before your appointment, please contact the pre-assessment nurse on 020 3312 9729/ 9730 at Western Eye Hospital or 020 3311 0137 at Charing Cross Hospital between 09.00 and 17.00, Monday to Friday.

If your eye becomes red or painful, or your vision gets worse, please contact:

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- Western Eye Hospital emergency department: 020 3312 3245
  - Western Eye Hospital eye clinic: 020 3312 3236
  - Alex Cross ward at the Western Eye Hospital: 020 3312 3214
  - Charing Cross Hospital eye clinic: 020 3311 0137 or 020 3311 1126
  - Charing Cross Hospital – Riverside Daycare unit: 020 3311 1460

If you have not received a post-surgery appointment, please contact 020 3312 3275 option 2

## How you can make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at [imperial.pals@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.pals@nhs.net) The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to complain by contacting our complaints department:  
Complaints department, fourth floor, Salton House, St Mary's Hospital, Praed Street  
London W2 1NY  
Email: [ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net](mailto:ICHC-tr.Complaints@nhs.net)  
Telephone: **020 3312 1337 / 1349**

## Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print or easy read, as a sound recording, in Braille or in alternative languages. Please email the communications team:  
[imperial.communications@nhs.net](mailto:imperial.communications@nhs.net)

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