MR DAVID CHEUNG

Consultant Ophthalmic and Oculoplastic Surgeon

Website: www.mrdavidcheung.com

Contact Info: The Edgbaston Hospital, Birmingham: General 0121 456 2000, Appointments 0121 452 2810

West Midlands Hospital, Halesowen: General 01384 560123, Appointments 01384 880174

PA Liz Carter 01384 632636

Asian/Oriental Blepharoplasty & Double Eyelid Surgery

Cosmetic Eyelid Surgery in Persons of Oriental Descent

We hope this information will help answer any questions you may have regarding Asian Blepharoplasty surgery. Please feel free to ask any further questions when you see Mr Cheung when you attend the hospital next time. This information sheet is for your general information only and is not intended to be a substitute for a proper consultation by a trained medical professional. Please feel free visit the website: **www.mrdavidcheung.com** for further information.

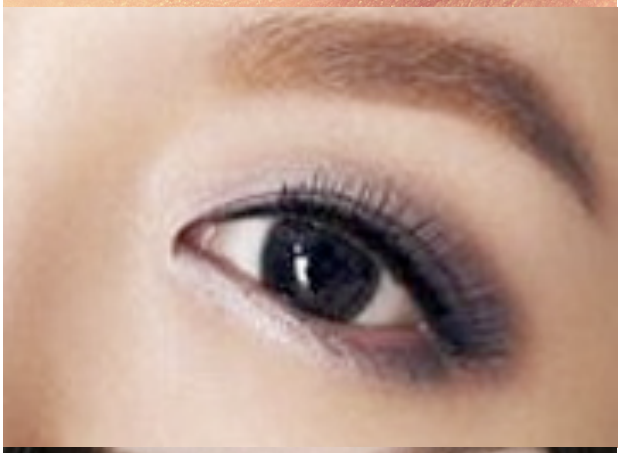
The Oriental Eyelid Crease

Regardless of race, the eyes and eyelids are central to one's appearance. The eyelid crease is an important landmark of the eyelid. Its presence, height and contour can dramatically alter the way an eyelid appears. The Oriental eyelid is very different to the Western/Occidental eyelid. Half of patients of Oriental descent lack an eyelid crease, whilst the remaining half do have a crease of some description. Because of the way an eyelid crease alters the appearance of an eyelid giving the appearance of two parts to the eyelid i.e. those above and below the crease, some have termed eyelids with creases as 'double eyelids' and those without creases as 'single eyelids'.

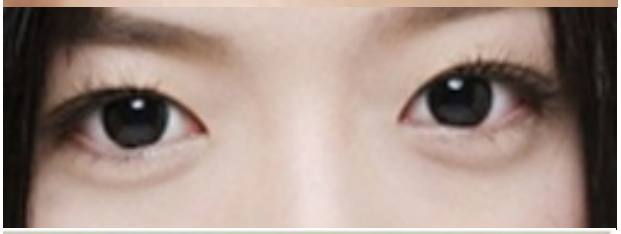
The cultural significance of an eyelid crease in Oriental society

For many Oriental societies, the presence of an eyelid crease is seen to be cosmetically desirable. Indeed, this is reflected in modern day culture with many Chinese/Japanese pop icons & models undergoing surgery or using eyelid glue or tape to achieve a skin crease. Asian upper eyelid blepharoplasty, also known as double eyelid surgery, is the most commonly requested cosmetic surgery by Oriental patients worldwide. The term blepharoplasty just means 'eyelid refashioning'. The term 'Asian Blepharoplasty' arose from the US, but probably a more accurate term would be Oriental blepharoplasty. It is also commonly known as 'double eyelid surgery'. This type of cosmetic eyelid surgery is performed on many types of patients of both Oriental and mixed Oriental descent. Asian blepharoplasty surgery is now the most commonly performed cosmetic procedure in people of Oriental descent in the US.

An Oriental eyelid without a skin crease-a so called 'single eyelid'. Note the eyelashes are slightly hidden and are orientated downwards by the upper eyelid fold. Patients often complain of difficulty wearing eye make-up.



This model of Chinese descent has a tapered skin crease.



This model of Chinese descent has a tapered eyelid crease. Note how the eyelid crease merges in with the inner corner of the eye giving a characteristic almond shaped eye.

This model of Chinese descent has a parallel eyelid crease. The eyelid crease is still almond shaped and is still characteristically Oriental in nature. Due to the presence of the eyelid crease, the eyelid is seen to have two parts to it, the part above and the part below the skin crease. Hence the term, 'double eyelid'. Cosmetic eyelid surgery in patients of Oriental descent, is most commonly to create a skin crease which is cosmetically pleasing but also consistent with what is normal both culturally and ethnically.

There are many patients of Oriental descent with different variations of eyelid shape seeking Asian blepharoplasty surgery e.g. without an eyelid crease, with an eyelid crease but poorly defined, with an eyelid crease but with hooding, etc. Most patients wish to acquire better definition of a pre-existing eyelid crease or to create a new eyelid crease. This can often lead to differences in how the patient is perceived and how the patient feels in him/herself. Just the presence of an eyelid crease can give the impression that the patient is more awake, more alert, more expressive with a softer, more attractive eye appearance. Many Oriental women comment on how they can wear make-up properly after Asian/Oriental blepharoplasty surgery/double eyelid surgery due to better definition of their eyelid and exposure of the eyelashes that were previously hidden.

A normal child of Oriental origin. Notice the variation in eyelid shape even within the same patient. She has no skin crease over her right eyelid and a skin crease over her left. Even though her left eye is as open as her right, the presence of the skin crease gives the impression of it being larger.

Asian/Oriental blepharoplasty (Double eyelid surgery) is NOT Westernisation Surgery

It is very important to recognise that the Oriental eyelid is very different to the Western/Occidental eyelid with very different anatomy. Similarly, it is also crucial that the surgeon recognise that there are many different variations of normal Oriental eyelids, both in those with eyelid creases and those without, depending on the patient's family origin.

The Occidental/Western eyelid crease is very different with a semilunar shape with greater exposure of the eyelid itself (lid show) due to its higher position and less prominent orbital fat

Most Oriental patients do NOT wish to look like their Western/Occidental colleagues. Indeed, a standard blepharoplasty designed for an Occidental/Western eyelid would look very strange in an Oriental patient and inharmonious with the rest of the patients face. Instead, most Oriental patients seek better eyelid crease definition i.e. to create an Oriental looking double eyelid. The surgery to create an Oriental looking eyelid crease is therefore very different to a conventional Occidental/ Western blepharoplasty. Counselling a patient for an Asian/Oriental blepharoplasty (double eyelid surgery) during the preoperative visit is probably just as important as the surgery itself, since it is during the preoperative visit that the important decisions about the design of the eyelid crease are made such as where to set the height and shape of the new eyelid crease.

The ultimate aim of an Asian/Oriental blepharoplasty (double eyelid surgery) is to create a skin crease to enhance the appearance of the eye, yet at the same time, preserve the features of Oriental ethnicity for the patient. It is therefore very important that when seeing a patient for the

first time for their eyelid surgery, that time and meticulous attention is spent to ensure that both patient and surgeon are clear about the desired eyelid configuration.

Surgical Methods

There are two basic methods for creating an eyelid crease:

- **A closed thread/suture technique**-where simple stitches are used to attach the skin to some of the deeper structures within the eyelid, thus creating a skin crease or
- **An open, incision technique**-where the skin is cut and new skin crease is made by directly attaching the cut edges of skin to the deeper structures.

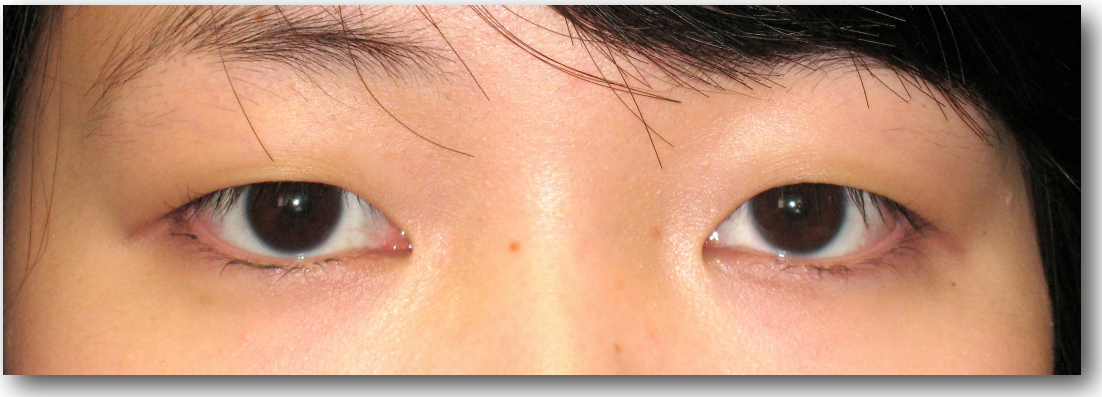
Although, Mr Cheung is comfortable performing types of operation, Mr Cheung prefers the latter open incision technique since it allows for excellent intricate design/construction of the eyelid crease. Also, the final result is more likely to be permanent due to the creation of stronger attachments between the skin and underlying deeper eyelid structures. Despite the open incisional technique being a superior operation, the closed thread/suture techniques remain the most popular operation worldwide due to their simplicity.

Regardless of technique, the operation is usually done as a day case procedure under local anaesthetic injections and is very well tolerated. Each operation usually takes about an hour to do both upper lids. Recovery time is usually very quick with minimal bruising & swelling that rapidly reduces over a few weeks.

Case Photographs
Case 1

Before surgery:

23 year old female of Chinese descent requesting bilateral Oriental blepharoplasty for greater exposure of her eyelids to allow her to wear makeup. She does have very rudimentary skin creases which are very low and requested a natural looking nasally tapered parallel skin crease with 3-4mm of eyelid exposure



2 weeks following bilateral Asian blepharoplasty (incisional technique).

Although most of the postoperative swelling has disappeared, some residual swelling remains which gives the appearance to the skin crease being higher than originally planned. The stitches are usually removed at 1-2 weeks following surgery

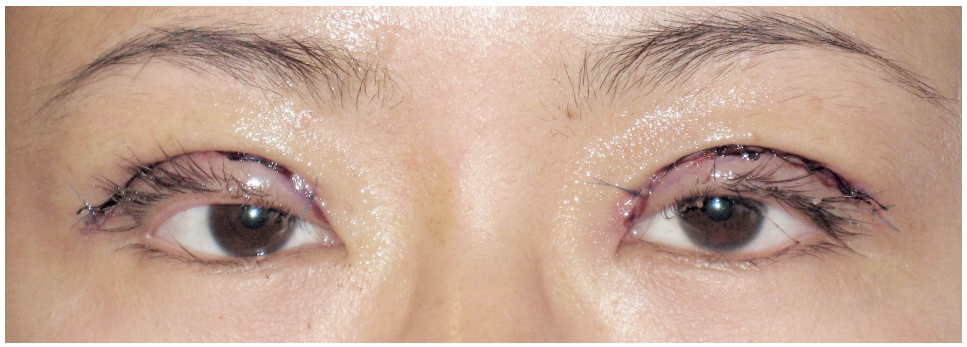
3 months following surgery.

The patient was very happy with the result.

Case 2

Before Surgery:

This 35 year old woman wanted her eyelids to look like they originally did when she was younger. As she aged, she noticed that her eyelid show had reduced.



1 week following incisional technique Asian blepharoplasty

Although most of the postoperative swelling has disappeared, some residual swelling remains which gives the appearance to the skin crease being higher than planned. The stitches are usually removed at 1-2 weeks following surgery

3 months following surgery.

The patient was very happy with the result.

Prices

The total typical cost for patients to undergo treatment for double eyelid surgery/Oriental blepharoplasty with Mr Cheung is £3500. This comprises of:

Consultations

The cost of the initial consultation is £100.

Surgery

- The method of surgery varies from patient to patient but most patients usually prefer for the surgery to be done as a day case under local anaesthesia. This means that the patient is awake during the operation but does not feel anything due to the numbing injections administered at the start of the operation. Most patients are very happy with this option since they can go home a couple of hours after the operation or stay one night in a local hotel.
- This is not only the most convenient method but also the least expensive at £3400 (all inclusive, fixed cost). This fixed cost price will include the cost of all medications, photographs, suture removal and 3 postoperative appointments.
- Though not usually necessary, if one does prefer to stay overnight in the hospital there will be an additional charge of £450 for the use of an overnight private room.
- If one wishes to be asleep during the operation, an additional charge of £350 is necessary for the services of an anaesthetist to administer general anaesthesia or sedation. However, most patients find the surgery very acceptable using numbing injections only.

What next?

If you feel that you would benefit from this procedure or would like to know more, please feel free to make an appointment. Most patients from outside of the region, prefer to see Mr Cheung at the BMI The Edgbaston Hospital. (Appointments 0121 452 2815)

What to Expect

Appointments before surgery

Since the eyelids have an integral part in the function and protection of the eye itself, it is imperative that full an eye exam is performed to look out for specific factors which may affect the success of surgery. The eyelids and eyebrows form an integral unit with the rest of upper face and midface, therefore their position and function are assessed e.g. measuring brow and cheek position. Mr Cheung will also go through your medication, past medical history, and discuss with you the risks and benefits of surgery. Mr Cheung will allow you to express exactly what you want out of surgery and explain to you what is realistically and safely achievable.

Mr Cheung often advises his patients to take Arnica tablets before and after surgery since they do are known to have help minimise bruising and expedite recovery. He will also discuss with you the options for anaesthesia and assess your suitability for each type.

Classically, eyelid surgery has been performed under **local anaesthesia** (patient awake but pain free) or **general anaesthesia** (patient asleep). To speed up recovery after surgery and make it safer and more comfortable for the patient, blepharoplasty is now often performed under **local anaesthesia with sedation**. Here, the anaesthetist gives a small amount of medication through a small needle into the bloodstream to help the patient to feel more relaxed and comfortable during the operation. It is safer and quicker than general anaesthesia since the patient recovers quicker and breathes normally throughout the operation. If a general anaesthetic is the preferred option, you may have to undergo a further consultation with an anaesthetist, with blood tests and heart tracing (ECG) to assess whether it is safe for you.

What should I expect on the day of surgery?

Before the operation, Mr Cheung will discuss with you the aims, benefits and risks of surgery again. Only after he is satisfied that you are entirely happy and understand about the surgery, will you be asked to sign an operation consent form. This is a legal requirement for all surgical procedures in the UK and is designed to ensure that procedures are performed with the informed consent of the patient. A photograph is often taken (with your consent) so that Mr Cheung will be able to compare your appearance before and after surgery.

What should I expect after surgery?

- After surgery, the eyes are sometimes bandaged to apply a small amount of pressure to minimise postoperative swelling. It is normal to expect a small amount of postoperative swelling/bruising for the first fortnight following blepharoplasty.
- For the 6 weeks after surgery, it is not uncommon to have a small degree of eyelid swelling. Sometimes this can give the impression that the skin crease is a lot higher than originally intended. Similarly, eyelid swelling if worse on one side, may make the eyelids look slightly asymmetrical. This is not entirely uncommon and is nothing to be concerned about. In most patients, 80% of the swelling would have disappeared by 2 weeks.
- Many patients return to work quite safely about a week after the operation. However, some patients prefer to stay off work for an entire fortnight for social reasons. You will need to rest and avoid bending down. Although it is often legal to drive following blepharoplasty, many patients prefer not whilst their eyes grow accustomed to the changes.
- It is quite normal to expect some discomfort due to the post operative swelling and it is normally easily relieved with simple painkillers such as paracetamol.

- Eye drops are often prescribed to help keep the eyes comfortable following surgery.
- Mr Cheung will advise you about a regime of ice pack compresses which have the dramatic effect of reducing the amount of swelling/bruising. Keep the scars dry and clean until the stitches are removed. Although dissolvable stitches can be used, Mr Cheung will often use non dissolvable stitches which allow more predictable wound healing. Do not apply eye makeup until your stitches have been removed.
- You will be advised to rest with your head elevated on pillows or cushions for 4 nights after your surgery and to avoid rubbing or towelling your eyes, whilst the wounds are still fragile.
- It is most important that you attend the postoperative outpatient appointments. Usually these are limited to 2 or 3 at one week, 6 weeks and 3 months post operatively.
- If you do wear contact lenses normally, it is often advisable to avoid wearing them for the first fortnight following surgery.

Risks of eyelid surgery

- Bruising
- Wound infection
- Blindness. This is extremely rare and is usually due to uncontrolled bleeding into the orbit following surgery or from acute glaucoma. It is for this reason, that Mr Cheung and other oculoplastic surgeons feel that blepharoplasty surgery should only be performed by surgeons who are capable of handling these rare complications.
- Damage to the surface of the eyeball or the surrounding muscles
- Double vision- due to damage to the muscles which control eyeball position
- Unusually red or raised scars (called keloid scars) which some people have an inherited tendency to form
- Sunken appearance if too much fatty tissue is removed
- A difference in appearance of the two eyes-they may not be exactly identical
- A few medical conditions make blepharoplasty more risky. They include thyroid problems, dry eye, high blood pressure or other circulatory disorders, cardiovascular disease, and diabetes. A detached retina or glaucoma is also reason for caution. For this reason in the US, it is recommended that all patients should see an ophthalmologist before any type of cosmetic eyelid surgery, regardless of operating surgeon.
- Although the risk of complications from cosmetic eyelid surgery is very low, their occurrence can be disastrous. These can range from mild, easily correctable problems such as undercorrection, to moderate problems such as surgery induced droopy eyelids (ptosis), to major problems such as blindness from orbital haemorrhage. For these reasons, it is always recommended that the surgeon that you choose to perform your blepharoplasty, should ideally be an oculoplastic surgeon since he/she can avoid these problems and be able to manage them if they do rarely occur.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is Double Eyelid Surgery so popular?

Asian blepharoplasty now is the most frequently performed aesthetic plastic surgery in Asia and among Asians living in the US. Although there are many attractive individuals that have the single eyelid type, many Orientals desire an upper lid crease, giving an overall impression of a larger appearing eyelid opening. Among women, this makes it easier to apply their eye makeup.

Who most commonly has this operation?

The best candidates for eyelid surgery are men and women who are physically healthy, psychologically stable, and realistic in their expectations. Most patients are female in the late teens to 40s, who commonly report difficulty applying eye makeup. Many patients use different types of eyelid glue or tape to give the appearance of an eyelid crease before seeking a permanent surgical solution.

Do many men undergo cosmetic eyelid surgery?

Yes, indeed cosmetic eyelid surgery amongst men, is growing at a faster rate than that of women.

I'm Chinese, 55 years old and have a skin crease already but I want to look younger, do I need an Asian blepharoplasty?

No. The point of Asian blepharoplasty surgery is to create a skin crease by creating a deep attachment between the skin and underlying deeper tissue structures of the eyelid. Patients of Oriental descent who already have a skin crease do not need to have a new skin crease formed but may benefit from a conventional cosmetic eyelid surgery to look younger. This is more in common with conventional blepharoplasty surgery i.e. removing excess skin, debulking fat, etc.

Despite the similarities though, care must be taken by the surgeon to ensure that a patient is not Westernised by the surgery. This involves taking great care in respecting the skin crease, intricate dissection and less radical fat removal.

I have asymmetrical eyelids. One eyelid has a skin crease and the other doesn't. What surgery should I go for?

The vast majority of patients with a single eyelid on one side and a double eyelid on the other desire symmetry. Usually they are happy with the double eyelid appearance and want the single eyelid to look double. Most patients therefore have surgery on the one eyelid only to create a skin crease to match the other. However, it is not uncommon for patients to request surgery on both eyelids because they aren't happy with either eyelid

How exact is the result of surgery?

No surgeon is perfect, no wound heals perfectly, no patient possesses perfect pre-existing anatomy, and some operations work better on one patient than on the next. A realistic expectation is that you should achieve about a 90% improvement. Some slight asymmetry is the rule rather than the exception.

How long does the improvement last?

Incisional techniques (open cut surgery) done properly should be permanent. Whereas suture techniques (closed using deep stitches to attach) typically last about 5-10 years.

If the incisional techniques are so good, why do I read about suture techniques on the internet so much?

The main reason why suture techniques are so popular is because they are technically much easier to perform with less surgeon experience required. They are also slightly less risky. For this reason, they are a commonly offered operation by many surgeons including plastic surgeons, oculoplastic surgeons and even general surgeons.

Mr Cheung offers both suture and incisional methods and is comfortable performing both.

I have dry eyes. Does this limit my options?

Yes, but only slightly.

Are the scars very noticeable?

The incision line is hidden within the crease of the upper eyelid so is invisible when the eyes are open. There is some mild redness of the incision which usually disappears within 10 weeks.

I want to have surgery. However, I'm concerned about what my friends and family might think

Although an individual's appearance is really their own concern only, Mr Cheung does recommend that patients contemplating this surgery discuss it with their friends and family too. Often patients attend an appointment with their family members.

I don't live locally. Is it a problem?

80% of patients undergoing this operation with Mr Cheung live outside of the West Midlands. Many patients travel to Birmingham for surgery and travel back home on the same day, accompanied by friends and family. It is not recommended that patients drive on the day of, or for several days after, the operation. If some eye pads are applied after surgery, they can usually be removed soon after surgery to facilitate travel back home on the same day. After surgery, appointments to review matters are usually at 2 weeks, 6 weeks and 3 months following surgery.

Can Mr Cheung speak Chinese/Japanese/Korean, etc.?

Mr Cheung speaks Cantonese-not brilliantly but often enough to be helpful!

When it comes to surgery on the eyelids, aren't most cosmetic surgeons approximately the same?

Put bluntly, no. Whilst blepharoplasty is perhaps the most exacting operation in the field of facial plastic surgery, the average plastic surgeon performs less than 40 such operations a year (Source: American Society of Aesthetic Plastic Surgery, 2005)

Is Mr Cheung a cosmetic plastic surgeon?

No. Mr Cheung is one of less than 150 fellowship trained ophthalmologists in the United Kingdom who practises in the advanced subspecialty of ophthalmic plastic and reconstructive surgery (also known as "oculoplastic surgery"). Oculoplastic surgeons unlike general plastic surgeons do not perform general plastic surgery e.g. breast augmentation, rhinoplasty.
Mr Cheung, like all oculoplastic surgeons, devotes the vast majority of his time both in the NHS and in private sector to operating on the structures of the eye and around the eye, performing over 600 eyelid operations per year.