

## BLEPHAROPLASTY TO CORRECT DROOPING EYELIDS (18 YEARS AND OVER)

### GUIDANCE FOR PRIMARY CARE

#### Differential diagnosis

Blepharoplasty surgery removes excess skin or fat from the eyelids to improve excess eyelid skin drooping beyond the eyelid margin or eye bags (dermatochalasis), often related to ageing. **It is important that dermatochalasis is distinguished from ptosis.** Ptosis is:

- An abnormally low-lying upper eyelid (not excess skin).
- A clinical sign, not a diagnosis, and can be caused by ageing and neurological, inflammatory and muscular conditions.
- Sometimes a need for urgent investigation and treatment (e.g. Horner's syndrome, giant cell arteritis and posterior communicating artery aneurysm).

Always make a referral for ptosis for a diagnosis. If the onset is sudden, then this should be an emergency referral direct to Ophthalmology. Ophthalmic emergencies featuring ptosis may also present with fever or a unilaterally smaller pupil. As a general differential guide, upper eyelids with dermatochalasis do not droop evenly across the horizontal axis and are more hooded laterally.

If in doubt, refer to secondary care.

#### Decision-making and referral for blepharoplasty

When there has been gradual increasing heaviness of the upper eyelid due to excess skin associated with ageing, the primary care setting is an opportunity to discuss whether the patient would be prepared to undergo blepharoplasty under BSW ICB criteria (see referral and secondary care criteria below). A person's decision to undergo surgery may be informed by the effect of dermatochalasis on their quality of life and the risks of eyelid surgery, such as dry and irritated eyes and noticeable scarring.

If ptosis can be ruled out, a patient with age-related dermatochalasis to the upper eyelid may be referred to secondary care for consideration of blepharoplasty.

### PRIOR APPROVAL IN SECONDARY CARE FOR UPPER EYELID BLEPHAROPLASTY (18 YEARS AND OVER)

BSW ICB will fund blepharoplasty to the upper eyelid when a specialist has diagnosed dermatochalasis, conducted an Esterman visual field test, and when the patient meets the criteria below. Information sent to Prior Approval must include the visual field test (VFT) result or a statement that the VFT is not suitable because of disability. Dermatochalasis is typically bilateral. Therefore, the ICB will fund, subject to criteria, bilateral blepharoplasty.

Funding criteria for blepharoplasty for upper eyelid dermatochalasis are as follows:

- There is evidence of significant visual impairment caused by the upper eyelid position or loose skin overhanging the upper eyelid blocking vision to the upper visual field  
**AND**
- The patient needs to raise the eyebrow using the forehead muscles or raise the eyelid manually or tilt the head backwards to remedy the loss of vision  
**OR**
- The patient has difficulty with specific visual tasks where no other cause can be found  
**AND**
- Secondary care has conducted an Esterman visual field test and provides Prior Approval with evidence (in the form of the visual field plot) that at least one of the two most superior points in the Esterman test is not seen by the patient in the binocular visual field.

**Note.** If the patient has a physical disability or cognitive impairment that prevents full assessment, or poor visual acuity (defined as 6/36 or less) that makes accurate visual field assessment difficult, then the specialist clinician will determine whether there is likely to be significant impairment of visual function due to the drooping eyelid or sagging skin to warrant surgery or not, and report this in a Prior Approval application as needed.

## **EXCEPTIONAL FUNDING FOR LOWER EYELID BLEPHAROPLASTY (18 YEARS AND OVER)**

Blepharoplasty for lower eyelid dermatochalasis is not routinely funded by BSW ICB for adults aged 18 and over unless there are circumstances related to policy exclusions (see below). If policy exclusions do not apply, an exceptional funding request is required.

### **Policy exclusions for upper and lower eyelid blepharoplasty**

BSW ICB funds blepharoplasty without the need to meet the criteria described above for patients under the age of 18 and for medical indications such as trauma, reconstructive surgery after cancer, correction of prosthesis difficulties in anophthalmia, infiltrative conditions (e.g., amyloidosis) and thyroid eye disease.

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