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BROW LIFT SURGERY

Q *What is brow lift surgery?*

A The brows may droop downwards a little as part of the ageing process or occasionally for other reasons - for example, a facial palsy. Brow lift surgery aims to correct the position of the brows to their natural level.

Q *When is brow lift surgery needed?*

A When the brows droop, the folds of skin in the upper lid become more obvious and may be uncosmetic or inconvenient. Occasionally vision can be affected. By correcting the position of the brows, the skin folds in the upper lids are reduced. However, it may also be necessary to reduce the skin in the upper lid (known as a *blepharoplasty*) to achieve the best result.

Facial palsy – a weakness of one side of the face – usually leads to a droop of the brow as well as other parts of the face. Recovery often happens without surgery, but if it does not, the brow droop can be corrected surgically. Other surgery may be needed to correct the droop of other parts of the face.

Q *How is brow lift surgery done?*

A There are several different operations.

The '*endoscopic brow and forehead lift*' is the procedure of choice for mild brow ptosis. The incisions are placed behind the hairline to avoid any visible scars. This procedure can lift the hairline a little so if the hairline is already high an alternative approach may be preferred such as the '*pretrichial lift*' in which the incision is placed just in front of the hairline - the scar is well hidden by the hair.

The '*trans-blepharoplasty brow lift*' requires no extra incisions and is performed at the time of upper lid blepharoplasty. It is aimed mainly at mild drooping of the outer end of the brow.

Marked drooping of the brows is best corrected with a '*direct brow lift*'. In this procedure the incision is placed directly above the brow in the lowest part of the forehead. This lifts the brow effectively but it does result in a fine scar immediately above brow. In most people the scar heals very well and is not uncosmetic.

Q *What are the results of brow lift surgery?*

A Careful selection of the correct approach to brow lift surgery enhances the results which are usually good. All brows drop a little in the months following brow lift procedures so the level of the brows at the end of the operation is designed to allow for this.

Q ***Are there any complications of brow lift surgery?***

A Yes, but only very occasionally. The '**endoscopic brow and forehead lift**' through incisions behind the hairline can result in damage to the facial nerve which can lead to further drooping of the brow. This is rare. Damage can also occur to the nerves supplying sensation to the forehead and scalp, leading to areas of numbness. This is also very uncommon and it almost always recovers. Depending on the exact position of the incisions, the hairline may be raised as mentioned above. Occasionally a small amount of hair may be lost close to the wounds. This grows again in a few weeks or months.

The '**pretrichial lift**' leaves a scar just in front of the hairline. This is usually easily covered by the hair.

The '**trans-blepharoplasty brow lift**' through the upper lid scar at the time of blepharoplasty may rarely cause numbness of the forehead. However, the main complication of this approach is insufficient lifting of the brows.

The '**direct brow lift**' results in a scar above the brow has been mentioned above. This approach may also cause numbness in the forehead and side of the head if the nerve which supplies sensation to these areas is damaged. Great care is taken during the surgery to avoid this complication but occasionally some numbness occurs.

Q ***What are the long term results of brow lift surgery?***

A Following any of these operations the brows may droop again slightly, although they usually do not droop to their previous level.

Scars created at the time of surgery gradually fade. Those placed immediately above the brows are the most visible but even these are usually not obvious. If the scar is unacceptable it can often be revised to improve it. Because of the risk of visible scars, the approach through an incision just above the brow is usually reserved for patients in middle age and beyond who already have some natural wrinkles in the forehead.

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