

Lagophthalmos: The Inability to Fully Close the Eyelids

TREATMENT OPTIONS USING
MEDDEV EYELID WEIGHTS



What is lagophthalmos?

Lagophthalmos is the medical term for a condition where a patient loses full function of one or both eyelids. It comes from Greek word *lagos*, which means hare – because hares sleep with their eyes open. Since humans are not hares, patients with lagophthalmos need to be evaluated by a physician as the condition can lead to serious problems, including loss of vision.

Lagophthalmos is often the result of paralysis of the facial nerve (the seventh cranial nerve) which controls the eyelid's closing muscle (orbicularis oculi). The paralysis can be permanent or transitory and can be the result of Bell's palsy, trauma, or stroke. It can also result, indirectly, from the surgical removal of certain types of tumors near the facial nerve.

Is lagophthalmos serious?

The ability to close the eyelid and blink is crucial to the distribution of the tear film necessary to maintain lubrication of the eye and proper eye health. When the blink mechanism doesn't function, the eye becomes dry, painful, and irritated. Prolonged dehydration can lead to problems including a decrease in, or even loss of vision.

How do I know I have lagophthalmos?

Your doctor, either your primary care physician or an ophthalmologist, will need to evaluate your symptoms to confirm a diagnosis of lagophthalmos. The evaluation includes a thorough history of recent injuries, traumas, surgeries involving the head, face, and eyelids as well as infections such as herpes zoster. The physician will also test your eyelids and globe as well as the cornea.

Are there treatments for Lagophthalmos?

Your physician may recommend eye drops and ophthalmic ointments to keep your eye well-lubricated. A Blinkeze® External Lid Weight may also be prescribed. Blinkeze External Lid Weights are positioned on the upper eyelid and use gravity to gently close the upper eyelid when the patient looks down or when the eyelid muscle is relaxed. Blinkeze External Lid Weights come in a variety of skin tones to match your complexion and are attached to the lid by double-sided hypoallergenic adhesive strips (see figure 1).



Figure 1: Patient wearing matching skin tone Blinkeze® External Lid Weight

What if my paralysis does not improve?

If your paralysis does not improve, your physician may recommend other treatments, including the surgical implantation of gold or platinum eyelid implant weights.

MedDev offers two eyelid implant designs, the Contour™ (see figure 2) and the ThinProfile™ (see figure 3). Your doctor will determine which implant design is best suited for your condition. Implanted eyelid weights function the same way as the Blinks External Lid Weights do to close your upper eyelid, but they are less conspicuous and easier for the patient to manage.

Are eyelid implants safe?

MedDev Contour and ThinProfile eyelid implants are both made from gold or platinum. Both materials are dense, inert, and highly biocompatible – that means they don't irritate the surrounding tissues. Platinum is approximately 10% denser than gold, which allows for a smaller implant profile. The color of our gold implant closely matches the color of the surrounding fatty tissue, so they are less conspicuous, even in patients with thin skin.



Figure 2: Contour™ Gold Eyelid Implant (1.0 mm thickness)

Figure 3: ThinProfile™ Gold Eyelid Implant (0.65 mm thickness)



MedDev eyelid implants have been used by patients all over the world for almost 50 years. Our products have undergone rigorous testing to assure the highest quality. Independent analysis confirms that the purity of the gold and platinum used in our implants exceeds 99.99%.

What happens if my doctor decides I need an eyelid implant?

Your doctor will determine what size eyelid implant will work best for you. If you've been wearing a Blinksze External Lid Weight, your doctor will already have a good indication of the right implant for you. Otherwise, your physician will evaluate your eyelid function using an eyelid weight sizing kit. Once the right size is determined, the doctor will order the implants for your procedure.

What happens during the procedure?

The surgical implant procedure typically takes less than an hour and can be done on an outpatient basis under local anesthesia. The surgery is frequently combined with other minor procedures to tighten the lower eyelid or with major procedures to improve facial palsy.

During the procedure, your doctor will make a small incision on the surface of your upper eyelid above the lashes (see figure 4). Then a small pocket is created to accommodate the eyelid implant (see figure 5). The implant is held in place inside the pocket with small sutures. Additional sutures are used to close the incision, and an antibiotic ointment will be applied to the closed incision. Your doctor may recommend a protective pad to cover the eye.

What happens after the procedure?

Your doctor will schedule a follow-up appointment a few days after the procedure to remove the sutures and check on your post-operative condition. You should now have improved eyelid closure and blink function.

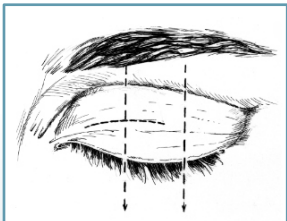


Figure 4: Location of incision in eyelid

Figure 5: Surgeon dissecting space for implant



After the swelling subsides, you will notice a small thickness in your eyelid where the implant is secured. You may experience minor discomfort, swelling and bruising and/or a slight redness near the incision line. In a short time, this discomfort will disappear, and the incision line will fade (see figure 6). Since the muscle that controls eyelid function may strengthen over time, the properly sized weight will close your eyelid slightly lower compared to normally functioning eyelids.

What are the risks?

Complications are rare but can include sensitivity to gold. For patients with a known gold allergy, platinum eyelid implants have been successfully used as an alternative to gold due to their excellent biocompatibility. In extremely rare cases, the implant may become displaced or erode through the skin. Such complications can be readily corrected but may require additional minor surgery.

The implantation is easily reversible if a patient's condition improves significantly.

Excessive swelling, inflammation or pain after your procedure is rare. In the unlikely event that such problems occur, notify your physician.

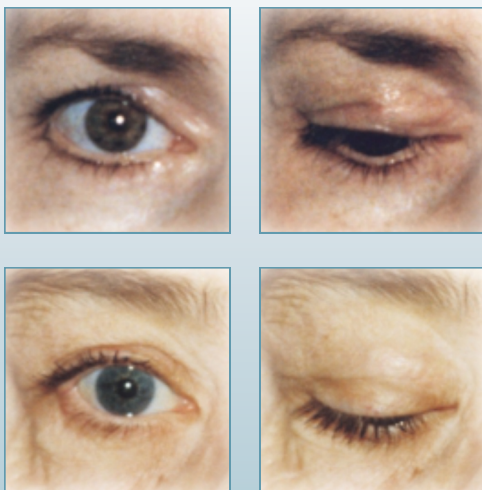


Figure 6: Patients following gold eyelid weight implantation procedure

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