

The Eyes Have It

Somebody once said, "The eyes are the window to the soul." They quickly reveal our emotions and what we are thinking.

Unfortunately they sometimes reveal more than we would like, especially our age.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a number of people look to smooth lines around and improve the appearance of their eyes using both medical and surgical procedures.

The eyes are a very complex piece of anatomy.

"When a plastic surgeon reviews a patient considering eyelid surgery, the forehead, eyebrow, upper and lower lids, surrounding skin and sometimes even the cheeks need to be taken into account," Warner's Bay Cosmetic Plastic Surgeon, Dr John Newton said.

"A patient's facial structure and even personality are all important aspects to consider. Consideration of rejuvenation of eyes is in itself a complex decision-making process."

The most common problems associated with the forehead and eyebrows are wrinkling of the skin and lowness of the eyebrows.

"Australians are very prone to forehead wrinkles, particularly between the eyebrows, due to bright sunlight causing us to squint more than we should," Dr Newton said.

Eyebrow position, however, is a more contentious issue. Many people believe that their eyebrows drop as they age, but for some of us the brows have always been low.

"While some people are concerned with the position of their brows, there are many celebrities considered attractive who have low brows. Tom Cruise is a prime example. In fact a number of cosmetic models also have low brows," Dr Newton said.

So the argument goes either way, but for those who may have a problem with the look of their brow, cosmetic surgery is a fitting solution.

The management of problems such as fine lines and lowering eyebrows range from the use of injectual material (including fillers like Restylane and Collagen to smooth finer lines or Botox to paralyze the muscles), through the use of suspension sutures placed deep to the skin, to brow lifting techniques (which can now be done with what is commonly known as key-hole surgery).

Any one of these procedures may compliment more traditional surgery to the upper lids.

As part of normal ageing, the skin of the eyelids may sag and become loose and baggy. Excess fatty tissue of both the upper and lower eyelids may contribute to this. Occasionally the skin excess is significant enough that the skin sinks down onto the lashes and can cause deterioration of peripheral vision.

"Surgery to correct the upper lids usually involves the cutting of the excess skin and muscle from the upper lid and removal of any excess fat," Dr Newton Said.

"To improve the lower lid, procedures also include the relocation of fatty tissue. In this technique the fat is teased down over the bony rim of the cheek bone to help enhance the cheek."

"Minimal skin is cut from the lower lids and occasionally the ligaments of the lower lids are tightened or in some cases even the angle of the eye changed."

"If individuals are only concerned with the appearance of fine lines the use of injectable fillers for temporary improvement is a good option but for longer term improvement, the laser may be appropriate," he said.

Dr Newton stresses that anyone considering any kind of plastic surgery should consult an accredited plastic surgeon to discuss their expectations about looking and feeling better.

"It is important to ensure that your surgeon is fully qualified and experienced, to offer you the best possible result," he said.

Plastic surgeons accredited by the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons must train for over eight years to be qualified to practice their speciality.

Further information about procedures and qualified plastic surgeons is available at the Australian Society of Plastic Surgeons website: www.plasticsurgery.org.au. Their telephone number for direct enquiry is (02) 9437 9200.

Dr Newton's surgery is located at 14 Howard Street, Warners Bay. He can be contacted on (02) 4948 4200.