

What is entropion and ectropion?

Entropion and ectropion are conditions that affect your eyelid (see figure 1).

- Entropion – Where your eyelid turns in and causes your eyelashes to rub against the cornea (the clear, dome-shaped outer layer at the front of your eye).
- Ectropion – Where your eyelid turns out and does not touch your eye.

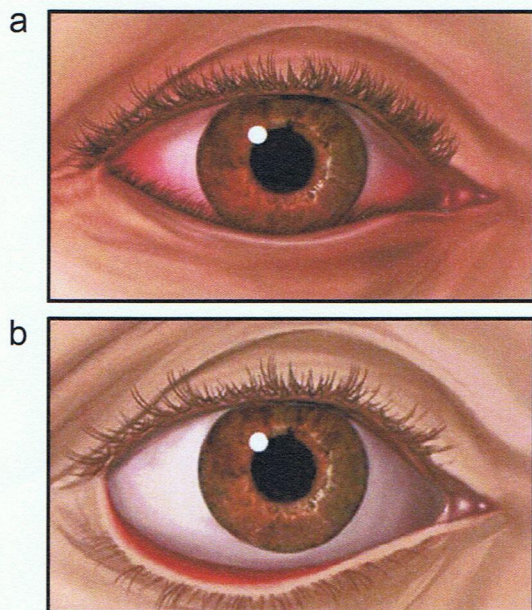


Figure 1

- a Entropion – eyelid turned in
- b Ectropion – eyelid turned out

Both of these conditions can usually be successfully treated by a minor operation. Your surgeon will assess you and let you know if surgery is suitable for you. However, it is your decision to go ahead with the operation or not. This document will give you information about the benefits and risks to help you make an informed decision.

If you have any questions that this document does not answer, you should ask your surgeon or any member of the healthcare team.

How does entropion or ectropion happen?

Usually the problem is caused by ageing. As you get older, the skin and soft tissues of your eyelids slacken, causing them to tilt inwards (entropion) or outwards (ectropion). Sometimes the problem is caused by scar tissue pulling the eyelid out of position. Usually only the lower eyelid is affected.

Your eyelid should usually wipe across your eye to keep it clean and moist. Entropion and ectropion cause irritation of your eye and eyelid leading to symptoms such as an unsightly appearance, a watery eye, discomfort, dryness or redness. Entropion symptoms are usually more severe as the constant rubbing of the eyelashes can scratch the cornea, causing infection and scarring.

What are the benefits of surgery?

If the operation is successful, the eyelid should be in a better position and your symptoms should improve.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

Artificial tears and ointments can be used to protect the surface of your eye and improve your symptoms. Your surgeon may recommend a special bandage contact lens for you to wear. However, this is usually a temporary measure to protect your eye until you have an operation. If you have entropion, your surgeon may recommend one of the following simple treatments.