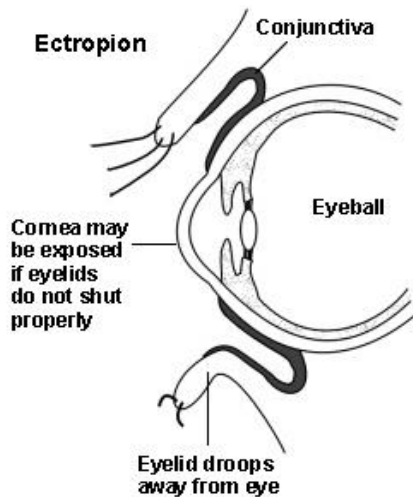


Ectropion

When part or all of the lower eyelid turns outwards away from the eye, the condition is known as an ectropion. There are various causes but the most common cause is simply an ageing effect of the eyelid that occurs in some older people. An operation can usually cure the problem.

What is an ectropion?



When part or all of the lower eyelid turns outwards away from the eye, the condition is known as an ectropion. Someone looking at you might be able to see part of the inner surface of the affected eyelid.

What is the cause of an ectropion?

An ectropion mainly occurs in older people. It is thought that the small muscles around the eyelid become weak with ageing. In most cases there is no other underlying problem.

An ectropion may also be caused by any condition that causes scarring of the eyelid or near the eyelid. For example, a burn, infection, tumour or injury to the eyelid.

Finally, any condition that causes weakness of the facial muscles may also include weakness of the eyelid and One eye alone may be affected. However, in the common age-related ectropion, often both eyes are affected.

What are the symptoms of an ectropion?

- The inner lining of the eyelid that droops forward may become dry and sore.
- The affected eye makes more tears to protect the surface (cornea) of the eye and so the eye may become constantly watery.
- The part of the eyelid next to the nose usually droops the most. This is next to the tear duct where tears normally drain into the nose. Tears may roll off the drooping part of the eyelid.
- Damaged cornea. The cornea is the transparent front part of the eye. The eyes may not be able to close properly if you have an ectropion. Therefore, the cornea is not fully protected and may get damaged. A corneal ulcer may develop. The cornea is vital for vision and a damaged cornea may affect eyesight.

What is the treatment for an ectropion?

The usual treatment is an operation to tighten the skin and muscles around the eyelid. Treatment usually works well. The best results are obtained if the condition has not become too severe. More extensive plastic surgery may be needed in severe cases.

If you cannot shut your eye properly, whilst awaiting an operation you may be prescribed some lubricating eye ointment to help protect the cornea. You may also be advised to tape the lower and upper eyelids together overnight to protect your cornea when you are asleep.

If your ectropion causes watery eyes, when wiping your eyelids do it in a direction up and in (toward the nose). This prevents you from pulling the eyelid downward and making the ectropion worse.