

Turned-Out Eyelid (Ectropion)



What Is Ectropion?

Ectropion is when the lower eyelid turns outward, away from the eye. This prevents the eyelid from closing properly, which can leave the eye exposed and dry.

You may notice:

- Red, irritated eyes
- Tearing or discharge
- A gritty or burning feeling
- Light sensitivity
- Crusting on the eyelid
- Blurry vision (from eye dryness or tearing)

What Causes It?

Ectropion is most often caused by aging, when the tissues around the eyelid become loose. Other causes can include:

- Facial muscle weakness
- Scarring from injury, surgery, or burns
- Skin conditions like dermatitis
- Previous eyelid surgery
- Facial nerve problems

How Is It Treated?

Temporary Relief

Before surgery, symptoms may be managed with:

- Lubricating eye drops or ointment
- Taping the eyelid in position
- Treating any skin inflammation or infection

Surgical Repair

The most effective treatment is surgery, which restores the eyelid to its normal position. It's usually done under local anesthesia as an outpatient procedure.

The surgeon may:

- Tighten the eyelid
- Remove scar tissue
- Reposition tendons or muscles

Surgery usually provides quick relief and protects the eye from further damage. Most people recover comfortably and return to normal activities within a week or two.

Risks and Considerations

Surgery is safe, but as with any procedure, risks may include:

- Bruising or swelling (temporary)
- Bleeding or infection (rare)
- Eyelid shape changes or recurrence

Let your doctor know if you take blood thinners, as these can increase the risk of bleeding.

Summary

Ectropion can cause dryness, discomfort, and vision problems, but it's very treatable. Your oculofacial plastic surgeon will guide you through the options and recommend a plan that protects your eye and restores comfort and appearance.

The Oculofacial Society is the American Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery (ASOPRS) public-facing website for patients and referring physicians. To learn more about the services provided by ASOPRS members, visit www.oculofacialsociety.org.

ASOPRS is a professional medical society dedicated to advancing education, research, and the quality of clinical practice in aesthetic, plastic, and reconstructive surgery of the face, orbits, eyelids, and lacrimal system.