

Ophthalmology Department

Electrolysis for ingrown eye lashes

Trichiasis (Ingrowing eye lashes)

Trichiasis is an inward growing or misdirection of the eye lash or lashes. The lid is in the normal position but the eye lash grows inwards. This then rubs against the front of the eye and can cause watering, irritation, infection or even permanent damage to the front of the eye.

What can cause Trichiasis?

We don't always know the cause but Trichiasis can result from:

- Injury or previous surgery to the eyelid which may cause lashes to grow in the wrong direction.
- Blepharitis, which is an inflammatory condition of the eyelid margin, can cause eyelashes to grow in the wrong direction. See **Blepharitis Leaflet** for lid cleaning instructions if you have been told you have this condition.

How can Trichiasis be treated?

Trichiasis can be treated by:

- Epilation where the eye lashes can be pulled out, they may re-grow in about four to six weeks, but they can be epilated again.
- Electrolysis treatment can provide a more permanent solution, preventing the lashes from re-growing, but this may have to be repeated several times to obtain a satisfactory result.

The eye lash must be visible to perform electrolysis.

What does electrolysis involve?

The treatment involves an operation, and the procedure is performed under local anaesthetic, as a day case, with or without sedation. Local anaesthetic eye drops are used along with an injection into the eyelid to numb the area. Once the eyelid is numb you should not feel pain or discomfort but you will still feel touch or feelings of pressure.

Electrolysis procedure

Electrolysis consists of inserting a fine needle into the lash root and passing an electrical or radiofrequency current through it, attempting to destroy the lash follicle.

Are there any other treatments for Trichiasis?

Freezing and laser treatment can sometimes be performed to remove eyelashes but this may not be the best treatment for you. Discuss this with your doctor.



Patient Information

Are there any risks or side effects of the operation?

- There may be bruising and swelling around the eye.
- There is a small risk of infection and some antibiotic ointment will be given as a precaution.
- There is a possibility of recurrence; Repeat electrolysis may have to be performed to obtain a satisfactory result.

What are the benefits?

- Relief of symptoms.
- Reduced risk of eye infection.
- Permanent removal of the eye lashes.

Will I need to be seen again after surgery?

You will have a routine clinic appointment approximately six to eight weeks following surgery to see if the eyelashes have re-grown. An appointment will be posted to you.

Some useful numbers: If you have any queries or concerns.

Pre-op assessment		024 6796 6531
Ophthalmic day unit	Monday to Friday. 7.30am - 5.30pm	024 7696 5923
Ward 32		024 7696 5238
Clinic 9	Monday to Friday. 8.30am - 5.00pm	024 7696 6606
Mr Ahluwalia secretary		024 7696 6506
Mrs P. Mehta secretary		024 7696 6508
Mr Kumar secretary		024 7696 6497
Sister Andria Johnson		024 7696 6533

UHCW Eye Casualty Tel 024 7696 6627

Open from:

Monday to Thursday

08.30am – 4.30pm

Friday

08.30am – 4.00pm

Saturday

08.30am – 12.00pm

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6533 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy

Document History - Author: Andria Johnson, Eye Unit **Published:** April 2010 **Reviewed:** Jan 2019
Review: Jan 2022 **Version:** 5.1 **Reference:** HIC/LFT/1003/10