



Gary S. Hirshfield, M.D., F.A.C.S.
Hirshfield Eye Associates
176-60 Union Turnpike
Fresh Meadows, NY 11366
Phone: 718-460-1200
Web site: www.newyorkcataract.com



Basal Cell Carcinoma

Basal cell carcinomas are the most frequent type of malignant tumor to affect the eyelid, making up 85% to 95% of all malignant eyelid tumors. They are most commonly found on the inner portion of the lower eyelid, particularly in elderly, fair-skinned people. Prolonged exposure to sunlight seems to be a risk factor for developing this form of tumor.

There are many different kinds of basal cell carcinomas, but the nodular variety is one of the most common. It appears as a raised, firm, pearly nodule with tiny, dilated blood vessels. If the nodule is in the eyelash area, some lashes may be missing. The nodule may have some superficial ulceration and crusting and may resemble a **chalazion** or **stye**. While these tumors are malignant, they rarely spread elsewhere in the body. For most of these tumors, surgery is the most effective treatment. In severe cases when the tumor has been neglected for a long time, it can spread into the eye socket, which may ultimately require removal of the eye and adjacent tissue.

Depending on the nature of your eyelid tumor, your ophthalmologist (Eye M.D.) may suggest one of many possible procedures to remove the tumor, including normal surgical excision, microsurgery, or cryosurgery. You should discuss the various options and their advantages and disadvantages with your ophthalmologist.

Eyelid surgery to remove the tumor and repair the eyelid is usually an outpatient procedure performed under local anesthesia. Risks of surgery are rare, but asymmetry of the eyelids is one possible complication.

After eyelid surgery, bruising or a black eye is common, but it resolves quickly. It may be difficult for you to close your eyelid completely, making the eye feel dry. This irritation generally disappears as you heal. Serious complications are rare but can include vision loss, scarring, and infection.