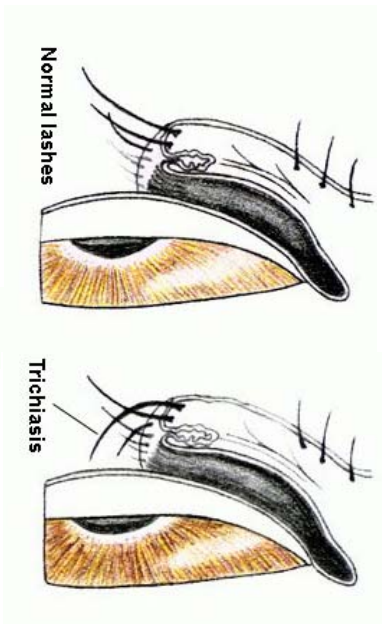


This information sheet is designed to provide more information for patients awaiting oculoplastic surgery by Mr David Cheung. Further information is available from Mr Cheung's website: [www.mrdavidcheung.com](http://www.mrdavidcheung.com)

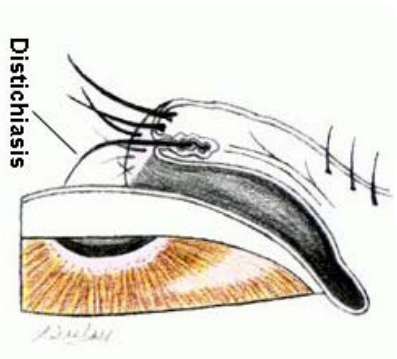
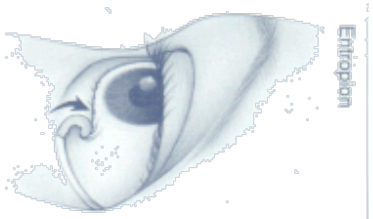


The term **trichiasis** is used to describe the misdirected growth of eyelashes. Instead of the eyelashes growing normally outwards, they instead point inwards, rubbing against the eyeball, causing irritation and discomfort.

What is Trichiasis?

What causes Trichiasis?  
There are essentially 3 ways in which trichiasis can occur.

1. In the UK, the commonest cause of trichiasis is entropion, where the skin of the margin of the eyelid which bears the eyelash follicles, starts to migrate inwards towards the eye itself. This causes the hair follicle to misdirect inwards. A common cause of entropion is blepharitis, a chronic inflammation of the eyelids causing scarring of the edge of the eyelid.
2. Injury to the eyelid can cause trichiasis, especially if the eyelid is damaged near its edge. If an eyelid wound is allowed to heal in a misaligned position, the eyelashes may point inwards, rubbing against the eyeball.
3. Trichiasis can also arise from a rare condition called distichiasis, where an extra row of eyelashes is present. These extra eyelashes



may grow inwards and also rub against the eyeball.

**What are the signs and symptoms of trichiasis?**

- Irritating, watering and redness of the eyeball
- Discomfort when looking at a bright light.

In severe untreated cases, the constant rubbing of the surface of the eye may cause an ulcer to develop, which, if left untreated, may result in loss of vision.

**How is Trichiasis treated?**

Trichiasis can be treated in a variety of ways, depending upon the number of lashes involved, the cause of trichiasis and the preference of the patient.

• **Epilation**

If there are only 1 or 2 abnormally growing eyelashes, it may be possible to just to pluck out the offending lashes (epilation). This tends offer only temporary relief, since the lashes will grow back usually within 6 weeks.

• **Electrolysis**

This treatment aims to destroy a small number of abnormally growing eyelashes by applying a small electric current using a tiny needle placed next to the hair follicle bulb. A small injection of local anaesthetic is usually given into the eyelid prior to the

treatment to ensure the procedure is pain free. An imperfect success rate of approximately 80% exists and is due to the inability to guarantee that the eyelash follicle bulb is receiving the damaging electrical current.

- **Surgery**  
Occasionally surgery to the eyelid itself may be required to either:
  - change the direction of growth of the eyelashes or
  - permanently remove the eyelashes by removing the eyelash hair bearing skin

Most trichiasis correction surgery can be done quickly and safely with very good long term results under local anaesthetic only as a day case.

Do you have any questions?

Write them down here and bring this with you if you have to come for any treatment of your trichiasis.

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Ophthalmology Department  
Sandwell General Hospital, Birmingham

Lid, Lacrimal and Orbital Service  
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Priory Hospital, Birmingham  
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## *Trichiasis:* Ingrowing eyelashes