

What is xanthelasma?

Benign yellow or cream coloured deposits of lipid-rich material within the eyelid skin, usually near the inner corners of the eyes. They are not cancerous, do not spread into the eye and do not normally affect vision or eye health.

Do you need treatment?

Usually not. Treatment is normally cosmetic and there is no clinical urgency. If their appearance does not bother you, leaving them alone carries no procedural risk. Treatment is reasonable when the expected improvement is worth accepting surgery, healing, a scar and the possibility of recurrence.

What about cholesterol?

Xanthelasma occur in many people with normal cholesterol, but they are associated with lipid disorders and with cardiovascular risk. If you have not had a recent assessment, we may suggest arranging one through your GP. Removing the deposits does not treat cholesterol, and treating cholesterol does not remove established deposits: they are related but separate issues.

Your alternatives

Leaving them alone, or photographic monitoring to document change, carry no procedural risk. Chemical, laser and other destructive techniques have been described, and their suitability depends on the depth, thickness and position of the lesion and your skin type. Surgical excision removes the deposit directly.

The trade-off that matters

Surgery removes the xanthelasma but cannot remove skin without creating a scar. The aim is not scar-free removal: it is a scar placed within the natural eyelid anatomy that becomes substantially less conspicuous as it matures. If you would not accept a fine scar in that position, you should not accept the operation.

Function comes before clearance

Removing too much eyelid skin can create tension or alter the position of the eyelid, which is a functional problem rather than a cosmetic one. Where complete clearance would require sacrificing an unsafe amount of normal skin, we may recommend staged treatment, another technique, or no surgery. Some xanthelasma may deliberately be left behind.

On the day

- Day case procedure under local anaesthetic. Eat, drink and take medication normally.
- The planned excision is marked before surgery.
- The deposit is excised and the skin reconstructed, with fine sutures where required.
- You go home the same day. Arrange your journey home.

Recovery

Bruising, swelling, redness and a visible incision are expected initially and the eyelid often looks worse before it looks better. These improve substantially over one to two weeks, and the scar then continues to soften and flatten for months. Do not judge the final result from the first few weeks.

What result to expect

Removal or substantial reduction of the visible deposit while preserving normal eyelid position and function. No operation can guarantee perfectly symmetrical eyelids, complete absence of visible scarring, an exact skin colour match, or permanent freedom from xanthelasma.

Main risks

Bruising, swelling, redness and temporary asymmetry are expected. Other risks include infection, bleeding, delayed healing, visible or raised scarring, pigment change, contour irregularity, residual xanthelasma, asymmetry and, uncommonly, alteration of eyelid position. Further treatment is occasionally required.

Recurrence

Xanthelasma can return, at the treated site or elsewhere on the eyelids. Surgery removes the lesions present but not the biological tendency that produced them, and recurrence does not mean the original surgery was incomplete or unsuccessful.

Warning signs

Contact Blue Fin Vision® promptly for increasing rather than settling pain, rapidly worsening swelling or redness, discharge or persistent bleeding, separation of the wound edges, or any severe or unexpected symptom.

Costs

Consultation and diagnostic assessment: £325. Current pricing for xanthelasma excision is published in [our published price list](#) and may change. Treatment for appearance is not normally covered by private medical insurance. You receive a written quotation before proceeding.

This page is a summary, not a consent document

It does not replace the full Xanthelasma Excision patient information booklet, which contains the complete information on suitability, alternatives, surgery, recovery, risks and recurrence, and which forms part of your informed consent alongside your discussion with your surgeon and your consent form. Please read the full booklet before your appointment. In full: [The Blue Fin Vision® Advantage](#)

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