

THE CUT

Would I do it again? Let Me Deinfluence You From Getting a Blepharoplasty

By Lauren Cody Hoffman, As told by Carol Lee | March 30, 2026



Photo-Illustration: The Cut; Photo: Lauren Cody Hoffman.

*The internet loves to accuse celebrities — like Jennifer Lawrence, Emma Stone, and Renée Zellweger — of getting upper blepharoplasties, procedures that remove fat and skin from the upper eyelids for a more wide-eyed effect. Its lesser-known sister, the lower blepharoplasty, has been gaining traction, according to **Dr. Kimberly Lee**, a board-certified facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon based in Beverly Hills. “Beyond hollowness and dark circles, patients often seek lower blepharoplasty to address under-eye bags, puffiness, or a tired appearance,” she says. Sounds promising for anyone afraid of filler and tired of piling on concealer, but it’s not always an accessible or easy fix.*

According to Dr. Lee, the procedure can cost anywhere from \$6,000 to \$15,000, and Dr. Omar Hussain, a dual board-certified facial plastic and nationally recognized aesthetic surgeon with the Practice Healthcare, says his office usually charges from \$6,500 to \$9,000. Plus, as with any surgery, it comes with its own laundry list of risks and complications, including dry eye, swelling, bruising, bleeding, and infection. “More specific risks include asymmetry, contour irregularities, and under- or overcorrection,” Lee explains. Other uncommon complications can include asymmetrical results, swelling, and ectropion, a condition in which the lower eyelid is pulled down.

Content creator and Los Angeles native Lauren Cody Hoffman was 35 years old when she got a lower blepharoplasty and fat transfer in September 2025. Three months later, she spoke about the procedure and the complications she experienced post-surgery in a TikTok video, which she labeled “deinfluencing plastic surgery.” Since then, her feelings about her experience have shifted. Here, Hoffman speaks on why she filmed that viral video and why she doesn’t regret her blepharoplasty, despite her initial misgivings.



Lauren Cody Hoffman before her pregnancies. Photo: Courtesy of the Subject

Since my early 20s, concealer was the first thing I would put on in the morning. I wouldn’t leave the house without it. My under eyes got more pronounced after each of my pregnancies. I had my daughter in 2023 and my son in 2024. Your body goes through so much with pregnancy and postpartum and not sleeping through all of that. At the same time, I’m at that age where signs of aging are starting to show anyway, and I started getting a lot more hollowness. I had seen a couple of dermatologists and med-spa injectors and asked, “What should I do?” They all suggested filler, but I didn’t want to do that because I had researched it and this is an area with a high likelihood of migration. It’s also a little dangerous to get filler there because it’s so close to your eye.



Lauren Cody Hoffman before her pregnancies. Photo: Courtesy of the Subject

I didn't necessarily go in being like, *Oh, I want to get a lower bleph*. I just went in and said, *Here's my issue. What would you do?* The plastic surgeon in Los Angeles said the No. 1 thing that would help me was a fat transfer. So they took fat from my stomach and moved it under my eyes. She also recommended doing the bleph with the fat transfer. The way it was explained to me was, like, if I'm filling a hole with sand, I have no idea how much sand to put in if I've never seen the bottom of the hole. But if I do the bleph, it will make it easier to know how much fat to put in, and it will end up looking more natural if I do it all together. So I was like, *Okay, that's great. Sounds like that will fix the issue*. At the time, even though I had never gone under the knife before, I thought that was the right decision for me because if I were to go the filler route or even try stem cells or something like that, those are things you need to do over and over. The cost would rack up over time. This surgery would be expensive, but it's a one-and-done thing and it lasts forever. You can go get more fat in a couple of years if you want it, but it's a permanent fix.

I ended up having a lower blepharoplasty with fat transfer. The bleph was transconjunctival, which means the scars from my surgery are underneath my eyelids, so I've never seen those stitches. I went with a more expensive doctor. I could have done it for less money, but I chose to pay more and be with someone I trusted, who was on the higher end of the spectrum.

During the surgery, you're under general anesthesia, so the surgery itself is not painful at all. You wake up and it's done. Then the first two days, you feel totally fine but a little loopy and you're on a lot of pain meds. After that, I remember it was still more painful than I'd expected, which made it a lot harder to care for my kids. And you're not supposed to lift anything heavy for ten days; that doesn't really work when you have young kids.

Right after the procedure, you look crazy. I had big bandages on me. When I looked under them, I was like, *Whoa*. The two stitches from the fat transfer were very purple and puffy. The whole shape of your face changes during those really early days because you're so swollen.



Hoffman two days after the operation. Photo: Courtesy of the Subject

About five days to a week after, I started feeling like I couldn't eat at all. I couldn't even have a bite of toast. I started feeling really dizzy, to the point that I couldn't stand, and I was having a lot of painful swelling. I started being like, *Oh no, is something really wrong? Did I get an infection?* I went to the ER because it was during the weekend so my doctor wasn't available. It turns out my surgery itself was totally fine, but I had COVID. I should have known it was COVID because I've had it before, but because I had the surgery, I thought my symptoms had to be related to the operation.

That was an early challenge, and getting COVID so soon after surgery is my doctor's theory on why the excessive scarring started. It wasn't until about week three that we realized I had excessive scarring; all of a sudden, I was waking up in the morning and I wasn't able to see. I had complete blurry vision to the point where I couldn't function. I couldn't care for my kids at all because I couldn't see. It would take about three hours in the morning for my vision to come back and stabilize, but it would still feel like my eyes weren't moving fast enough or there was something in my peripheral that was off. I talked to my doctor about it at one of my post-op appointments. She said some blurry vision is normal with blephs, but what was happening to me wasn't normal. We figured out that excessive scarring was attaching my eyelids to my orbital bone and pulling them down. If you look back at some of my photos taken during that time, you can see how my eyelids are pulled down.



Hoffman two weeks after the operation. Photo: Courtesy of the Subject

As a result, my eyes weren't closing at night. It turned out severe dry eye was causing me not to be able to see. It was scary. My doctor put me in touch with an ocular plastic surgeon and an ophthalmologist, and I went down to Orange County from where I live in Los Angeles to see some of the best people. They did every eye test imaginable to confirm it was dry eye.

One of the questions I had asked during my initial consultation was "What is recovery like?" The doctor told me most of her patients do fine and I could get back to work in a couple of days. So

I wasn't mentally prepared for how long the recovery would take until I was in the middle of it. And when it didn't start to look better after about ten days, I started freaking out because that wasn't the expectation I felt I was set up for. But one of the big things I learned is that when you're going in for plastic surgery, you need to be very specific with your questions to your doctor. When she said it would take only a couple of days to recover, I'm sure she was talking about a different part of the recovery process or how I was going to feel, instead of what I would look like. We had a miscommunication there.



Hoffman three weeks after the operation. Photo: Courtesy of the Subject

I wish I had asked, "How long is my face gonna look weird?" After the procedure, a lot of my friends were like, "You look fine. You don't look that different. You just look like you're really tired." But I was like, "No, no. I know my face so well, and I look crazy to *me*." I needed to have asked more specific questions related to the mental-health aspect of it. Like "How long can I expect to be uncomfortable with the way I look?" versus "How long can I expect to be physically uncomfortable?"

Plus I wasn't super-happy with how it looked. Seeing pictures of me before and after with my eyelids pulled down by the scarring made me think, *Oh my God, I looked better before. What did I do?* I started doing some self-reflection. I was so beautiful before, so what was I thinking? If I had just not nitpicked, would I have saved myself from all this stress and pain? And as a mom, I found the way it took time away from my kids was causing a lot of guilt. I started thinking that moments like this make you reassess what's important. I thought about how my kids would love me no matter what. They think I'm so amazing and beautiful. If I could just see myself that way, that would be so amazing.



Hoffman four weeks after the operation. Photo: Courtesy of the Subject

Another thing was that when the scars were still really thick and not as healed, I could feel them — it felt like something was in there when I smiled, and it was so foreign and uncomfortable that it made me think about it all the time. About a month after the surgery, to treat the scarring, my doctor started giving me 5-fluorouracil injections in the area. That has been accelerating the healing process. The injections help the scar tissue detach from the bone, helping everything drift back up to where it's supposed to be. I've had at least five or six injections; at first, they were every two weeks or so, starting from three weeks to a month after the surgery. We don't really know how many it'll take to fully treat the issue.



Hoffman after a 5-fluorouracil injection. Photo: Courtesy of the Subject

When you're living your life, three months seems like a long time, especially to recover from something if you've never had a surgery like that before. Like, a cold is over in a week. At three months, it felt like this should be over by now, when really that's not even that long. I should have had a little more patience with it at that point, but I had so many questions: *What is going on? Is this ever going to get better?* Of course, my doctor was assuring me it was. But when you're highly emotional about something, you're not always listening to the people who know what they're talking about. It's your face. You're looking at it all the time. You know it better than anybody else. So you know when there's a weird groove or bump no one else would ever notice.



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I don't even know what to put for a caption

🎵 original sound - Lauren Cody Hoffman

I posted a video of myself on the internet crying because I had been in and out of the plastic-surgery office a bunch of times and I was feeling like there was still no progress. The injections are really, really painful. I've had migraines my entire life, and the injection feels like it hits a nerve that gives you an instant, extremely powerful migraine that lasts for ten minutes. When you're in any kind of pain, you're already more emotional. So that's where a lot of that emotion was coming from. It had to do with pain, realizations about myself, and impatience.

But about three months after the surgery, and almost right after I posted that video, the scar started detaching, and I could feel the progress really accelerating. The injections cause bruising, and they're very deep bruises that contribute to the darkness. That has been a downside because darkness was one thing I wanted to get rid of and it ended up being even darker. But that will go away. Other than that, I'm really happy with the way it all turned out, and it did fix my insecurities around hollowness. At this point, the area already looks smoother, even though there's still more healing to be done. And my eyesight is back to normal.



Hoffman six months after the procedure. Photo: Courtesy of the Subject

In the end, I would do things a little differently. First, I would ask a lot more specific questions in my consultation. I would always recommend asking those questions to a bunch of different doctors just to make sure the one you choose is the right fit. *What are common complications that happen? How would you handle them?* Then you at least know how different doctors would handle those situations. I was lucky in that even if I had interviewed a bunch of doctors, I still would have chosen mine. I think she handled the situation really well, and she was ready to take action right away to fix the issue. I've gotten a lot of DMs from girls saying, "Wait a second, the same thing happened to me, and I haven't been offered those injections." I would also talk to the doctors about the healing process in detail. *What do days one through five look like? What is it like for the next six months?*

Another thing I would have done differently is to wait till my kids were older. After giving birth, your identity goes through so much, so when you look in the mirror and see a different person, it can be really mentally jarring. I think I was trying to get a bit of my old life back. My life will never be the same, and I like my life better now. I have always wanted to be a mom. My son was only 8 months old when I did it, and he needed so much care. Maybe once my kids were like 3 and 5 it would have been a better time to do it. It was definitely hard on my husband because we both work and we had expected my recovery to be shorter. Our planning around the kids got messed

up and then I was going to all these doctors' appointments in Orange County and Beverly Hills and being away. But my mom has always helped, so she came over a lot more. I still ended up having to do more work with the kids than I probably should have at the time. That's another reason I would have done it later because I was doing things I wasn't supposed to, like lifting them when maybe I shouldn't have, which probably didn't help.

A lot of people on the internet go out there and they're like, *I did my plastic surgery, and it looks amazing, and I love it.* They almost have this air of defensiveness around it. Like, *It looks so good, and I'm so happy I did it, and no one should tell me I shouldn't do it.* But the people who have complications tend to get embarrassed and hide away. I was like, *No one's talking about this. But I'll tell you.*

With any surgery you have, no matter how routine it is, there's always a risk involved. You need to assess that for yourself because we live in an age when things feel so accessible because of the internet. In reality, plastic surgery is more serious than it seems online, especially when you're being inundated with videos of it going well. You have to really meditate on the cost of the risk and, if it weighs on your mind, whether it's worth it or not.

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