

Periscope

COSMETIC SURGERY

A Lush Mane of Lashes?

GROWING UP, Alevé Loh, a 30-year-old marketing manager in L.A., longed for thicker eyelashes. "My best friend always had amazing huge, big eyelashes. I was like, 'I want those!'" Loh's dream became a reality after she underwent the latest form of cosmetic surgery: eyelash transplants. The procedure has been around for more than a decade, pioneered by hair-restoration surgeons as a way of helping burn and accident victims, or people who suffer from compulsive hair pulling. But as word spread about the procedure, doctors saw more and more healthy patients seek implants. "There's been a virtual explosion of these surgeries for cos-



BEFORE AND AFTER: Longer is better

metic purposes," says Dr. Alan Bauman, a Florida surgeon. "In the past four or five months I've had about 100 inquiries. A couple years ago we were doing

just maybe one a month."

Surgeons harvest a fingertip-size patch of hair from the back of the scalp. Then they isolate individual follicles and implant anywhere from 10 to 50 lashes on the top lid using a curved needle. Patients are awake throughout the procedure (after taking a sedative) and receive a local anesthetic to minimize pain. Side effects may include temporarily puffy lids and scarring. There's also regular upkeep: the new eyelashes continue to grow at the same rate as the hair on your head, so they must be continually trimmed. "Whenever I tell people about the surgery, that's the thing that freaks them out," says Loh. The cost: as much as \$3,000 per

lid. Fewer than a dozen surgeons in the United States regularly perform the procedure, but with demand growing, more are sure to learn. -JULIE SCELFO