

Surface Tumors on the Face & Reconstruction Options

What Are Surface Tumors?

Surface tumors are growths that develop on the **outer layer of the face**, mainly affecting:

- **Skin**
- **Epidermis and dermis layers**
- **Lips, nose, eyelids, cheeks, and forehead**

They are usually:

- **Benign** (like moles, warts, keratoacanthomas)
- **Pre-cancerous** (like actinic keratosis)
- **Malignant skin cancers**, including:
 - **Basal Cell Carcinoma (BCC)** – most common, slow-growing
 - **Squamous Cell Carcinoma (SCC)** – faster growing, can spread
 - **Melanoma** – most dangerous, can spread early.

When Should You Worry?

- New growth that doesn't heal
- Changing mole or spot (color, size, shape)
- Bleeding, crusting, or pain on the skin

Early diagnosis and removal are **essential** to prevent spread and minimize scarring.



Reconstructive Options After Tumor Removal

Removing surface tumors may leave behind **skin loss**, visible **scars**, or **functional problems** (like difficulty closing the eye or smiling). Reconstruction helps **restore natural appearance and function**.

Common Reconstruction Techniques for Surface Tumors:

1. Primary Closure

- Wound edges are stitched together directly
- Used for small tumors with minimal skin loss

2. Skin Grafting

- A thin layer of skin is taken from another part of the body (like thigh or behind the ear)
- Used for superficial skin loss
- May not match the original skin color exactly

3. Local Flaps

- Nearby skin is rotated or moved to cover the defect
- Provides better color and texture match
- Common flaps:
 - **Nasolabial flap** – for nose and lip
 - **Glabellar flap** – for mid-forehead/nose
 - **Mustarde cheek flap** – for eyelids and cheeks

4. Regional Flaps

- Skin and soft tissue from adjacent areas like the forehead or neck
- Used for larger or deeper defects
- Example: **Forehead flap** – gold standard for nasal reconstruction

5. Tissue Expansion

- A balloon is inserted under the skin and gradually inflated
- Stretches nearby skin to cover the defect
- Good for larger cosmetic reconstructions (e.g., forehead, scalp)

6. Staged Procedures

- Some areas (like nose or eyelids) may need 2–3 staged surgeries
- Ensures both form and function are restored properly

Why Reconstruction Is Important

- Minimizes **scars** and **disfigurement**
- Restores **facial expressions** and **eye/mouth function**
- Helps regain **confidence** after surgery

Tips for Patients

- Get suspicious lesions checked early
- Reconstruction is tailored to your face and your needs
- Plastic and reconstructive surgeons work to preserve both **beauty and function**

"Surface tumors may look small, but their impact on the face can be big. Early treatment and proper reconstruction can make a huge difference."