

Reconstructive Intervention and Surgery

Reconstructive surgery is a medical intervention strategy to rectify defects in the body caused by ageing, injury, infections, congenital anomalies and tumours. The surgery aims to improve the form and function of any body part, from toe to the head, in kids, adults and elderly.

Reconstructive surgery is mistaken for plastic surgery but they are two different disciplines. The former restores the function of a body part while the latter is about achieving aesthetics. In fact, most cosmetic surgery procedures performed in India are reconstructive.

Individuals with craniofacial deformities, cleft lip, hand abnormalities, and other defects present at the birth are ideal candidates for reconstructive surgeries. The procedure is now the mainstay of cancer care, helping oncologists to treat malignancies with more precision.

How Reconstructive Surgery Works?

The procedure involves multiple reconstructive techniques to remedy the damaged body part. The commonest technique is the “free flap surgery,” a micro-vascular approach entailing a tissue transplant from one part of the body to the damaged part. The surgeon determines the donor organ depending on the damaged part. For instance, a suitable bone from the leg may be transplanted in a jawbone deformed by trauma to restore its function and form. Usually, the blood vessels are connected to the recipient site with tiny stitches visible only with a microscope.

With technological headways, transplants are now giving way to biomaterials. These are specialized plastic materials implanted to the defected body part to enable it to function the way it should. Biomaterials are compatible with the human body and effectively adapts to the role of the body components they substitute. The biomaterial implantation requires the highest level of skills and understanding of bioengineering, along with the anatomical aspect of the issue.

Types of Reconstructive Surgeries

Reconstructive surgeries come in all shapes and sizes to streamline any disfigured, damaged and defected part and help the patient to lead a normal or near-normal life. These include:

1. **Breast reconstruction:** Usually confined to women experiencing back pain and other issues due to abnormally large breasts. Females who have undergone a mastectomy are also ideal candidates. At times, the procedure is also recommended to males.
2. **Feet and Hand Surgeries:** These surgeries remedy anomalies caused by malignant and benign tumours. People with extra fingers, webbed toes and carpal tunnel syndrome may be considered.
3. **Surgery for injury:** A lifesaver for people with severe burns, injuries and skin grafts.
4. **Flap Surgeries:** When replacing a defected or dysfunctional body part is needed, flap surgeries come to the picture. Also known as micro-vascular procedures.
5. **Facial Procedures:** Those with facial defects, including cleft lip are recommended facial procedures. Infections related to sinuses and certain breathing issues are also treated.
6. **Scar revisions:** If unsightly scars from an earlier surgery or injury are ruining your appearance, the reconstructive surgeon might recommend scar revisions.

Reconstructive surgery is an individualized intervention strategy. The surgeon factors in your medical history, the extent of the damage, recommendation for **cancer treatment** and personal inclination. The treatment plan is implemented on medical necessity after thorough diagnosis.

What to Expect Before, During, and After Surgery

Reconstructive surgery can be unnerving for the patient, more so in lack of knowledge. So, it's important to beef up your knowledge on what to expect before, during and after the surgery.

Before the surgery:

1. Come to terms with your condition and be mentally prepared. It's vital for recovery.
2. Check with your insurance provider whether the surgery is covered or not.
3. Sign the approval documents that the treatment facility might ask you to.
4. Ask the surgeon about risk factors and recovery plan.
5. Undergo all the diagnostic screenings recommended by the surgeon.
6. Quit smoking at least 15 days before the surgery, as it may lead to complications
7. Follow the diet regime specified by the surgeon
8. Intake medications regularly as prescribed.
9. Avoid wearing jewellery or makeup on the day of the surgery
10. Prefer wearing glasses instead of contact lenses

During the surgery:

1. You'll be moved to the operation theatre
2. The duration of the surgery depends on your condition
3. You'll be either given a local or regional anaesthesia
4. The areas specified for incisions might be marked on your body
5. A tube is likely to be placed in your throat to facilitate breathing
6. Your heart rate and BP will be constantly monitored
7. A team of surgeons and support staff will do the needful

After the surgery:

1. You'll be shifted to the recovery area where the staffs monitor your condition
2. Your hospital stay varies as per the type of surgery performed

Adhere to the recovery instructions by the surgeon for a safe and speedy recovery