

VENICE PLASTIC SURGERY

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Cosmetic, Reconstructive, Face, Breast, and Hand Surgery

Facial Injuries

Plastic surgeons are often called to repair facial injuries. The face can take a lot of punishment. It was designed to take a bad hit as from a baseball or steering wheel. The sinus cavities are like your car's crumple zones. They work as shock absorbers. Yes they break and need repair but the deeper structures are shielded. And we all thought the sinuses were just to make colds and allergies miserable.

The anatomy is truly amazing. If you get hit hard right in the eyeball there is a safety zone. The eyeball gets displaced downwards into the cheek sinus cavity. The sinus gets injured but the more critical eyeball may be spared.

Most facial structures are in pairs. This has obvious benefits. Even the single tongue however has blood and nerves supplied from the left and right sides. If one side gets injured the other side keeps working. The brain has sides. If one area is destroyed by a stroke, another area may be able to take on some of that function.

There is more blood circulation to the face than to other body areas. This is why facial wounds heal faster. The circulation is usually less in the legs and feet causing these areas to heal slowest. Swelling is detrimental. Also gravity plays a role. Since people spend little time upside down most swelling goes out of the face but into the legs.

How are these repaired? As in other body injuries we repair things from the inside out. First the broken bones are fixed. Sometimes we use plastic or metal plates like those used for hip or leg fractures. These facial plates are much smaller and thinner however. The screws may be only 2 or 3 millimeters thick. Muscles, nerves and blood vessels may then need repair. Finally the the skin and fatty layers are reconstructed.

Often there is tissue missing or destroyed. We may have to bring in fresh tissue from other body areas. Plastic surgeons often use a lot of small stitches to suture things together. Other doctors generally use fewer and larger stitches. It is truly an art form to reconstruct a face. We can do a lot of things but the final product is only partly a result of how good the repair goes. Equally important is the severity of the original injury, the time delay before repair, infection or other diseases that may be present and of course your own healing capabilities.

Again I emphasize safety. Use glasses to protect the eyes. Do not put your face into reach of a dog or other animal. Wear your seat belt. Exercise extreme caution while boating, particularly docking. Use a helmet for bicycling and motorcycling. Mouth guards are essential for contact sports. This includes baseball, basketball and soccer to mention a few. Excess drinking of alcohol takes its toll. People trip and fall and of course have car accidents.

The face is one of the most frequently injured areas. We need to protect this complex and beautiful area. Plastic surgeons can do a lot but we cannot fix everything. An injured area may be well repaired but it will never be as good as new. The face is an area of beauty. Protect it.

The above represents the opinion of A. E. Haas, M.D.

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Just call us directly. No referral needed unless required by your insurance company

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