



What is a Skin Flap?

1. What is a Skin Flap?

A **skin flap** is a section of skin, sometimes including underlying tissue like fat, muscle, or blood vessels, that is **moved from one area of the body to another** to cover a wound, surgical site, or area where skin is missing. Unlike a skin graft, a flap usually **maintains its own blood supply**.

2. Why is a Skin Flap Needed?

Skin flaps are often used when:

- A wound or surgical site cannot heal on its own
- Skin grafts are not suitable
- Cosmetic or functional reconstruction is needed, for example after:
 - Skin cancer removal
 - Trauma or burns
 - Surgical defects

3. Types of Skin Flaps

- **Local Flap:** Skin is moved from an area next to the wound.
- **Regional Flap:** Skin is moved from a nearby region, sometimes rotated or advanced.
- **Free Flap:** Skin (and sometimes tissue) is completely detached and transplanted, with blood vessels reconnected microscopically.

4. How the Procedure is Performed

- The doctor plans the flap based on the size, shape, and location of the wound.
- The flap is carefully lifted, moved to cover the defect, and stitched in place.
- Donor site (where the flap came from) may be closed directly or covered with a graft.
- The procedure may be done under local or general anesthesia, depending on size and location.

5. What to Expect After Surgery

- Mild to moderate pain, swelling, or bruising
- Dressing over the surgical site

- Instructions to keep the area clean and avoid strain
- Follow-up visits to check healing and flap viability

6. Risks and Complications

- Flap failure (partial or complete)
- Infection
- Bleeding or hematoma
- Scarring
- Changes in sensation (numbness or tingling)
- Poor cosmetic result

7. Recovery

- Healing time varies depending on the flap type and location
- Avoid strenuous activity or pressure on the flap
- Follow wound care instructions carefully
- Attend all follow-up appointments

8. Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What type of flap will I need?
- What are the specific risks for my procedure?
- How long will recovery take?
- Will I need additional surgeries?