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Progress with facial paralysis

Most of us never give a second thought to being able to blink, chew, swallow or smile. But if the nerves governing those functions are severed - either accidentally or because they must be during certain kinds of surgery - the face is paralyzed on the side of the injury.

Now, however, Dr. Michael E. Sachs and Dr. John Conley of Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center have devised an operation that thaws frozen faces by: 1) using a nerve graft to reconnect the facial nerve to its branches around the eye; and 2) dividing the chewing muscle and transposing its two parts, with their own nerve supplies, to areas above and below the mouth.

In a recent issue of The Archives of Otolaryngology, a speciality journal of the American Medical Association, Sachs and Conley report that the muscle transposition allows the patient to chew and swallow immediately. With training he or she can learn to simulate a smile, and that blinking and other voluntary eye movements begin to return about nine months after the surgery.



Due to a brain tumour patient is unable to smile or blink



After surgery by Dr.Sachs patient has fully restored facial functions