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## **41-Year Old Patient Reports Improved Breathing Following Rare Phrenic Nerve Transplant**

### ***Innovative Surgical Procedure Has Implications for Spinal Chord Injuries, Heart Surgery Complications and Lung-Related Illness***

The Plastic Surgery Center today announced that a 41-year old male, who underwent a rare phrenic nerve transplant in September 2007, has reported improved breathing. Additionally, Dr. Matthew Kaufman, the New Jersey-based plastic surgeon who performed the procedure, has documented a broader range of movement in the patient's diaphragm and lungs.

In a complex procedure, doctors transferred a nerve from the patient's leg to his brain, neck, chest and lower lung to repair the phrenic nerve. Six months before the nerve transplant, the patient, who resides in Roanoke, Virginia, received a needle injection during shoulder surgery that partially damaged his diaphragm. Following the injury, the former skier had trouble breathing and was unable to exercise.



"We are very impressed with the patient's unprecedented progress," said Dr. Kaufman, who performed the surgery at St. Peter's University

Hospital in New Brunswick, NJ. "His recovery is particularly noteworthy because it's the first time this grafting technique has been used several months after injury to the phrenic nerve."

Phrenic nerve transplants would also apply to patients who suffer from breathing problems as a result of the following:

- \* Spinal chord injury
- \* Heart surgery
- \* Pulmonary disease