



Frequently Asked Questions About Mohs Surgery

What is Mohs Surgery?

Mohs micrographic surgery is a type of microscopically controlled surgery that treats skin cancer by removing thin layers of skin and examining them for cancer cells.

What are the advantages of having Mohs surgery done over a regular excision or other destructive methods?

Other skin cancer treatment methods blindly estimate the amount of tissue to treat, which can result in the unnecessary removal of healthy skin tissue and tumor re-growth if any cancer is missed.

Mohs surgery is a unique skin sparing procedure and is 100% effective because of the way the removed tissue is microscopically examined. This allows complete removal of the skin cancer by evaluating the surgical margins. The pathologic interpretation of the tissue margins is done on site by the Mohs surgeon, who is specially trained in the reading of these slides and is best able to correlate any microscopic findings with the surgical site on the patient. Advantages of Mohs surgery include:

- Ensuring complete cancer removal during surgery, virtually eliminating the chance of the cancer growing back
- Minimizing the amount of healthy tissue lost
- Maximizing the functional and cosmetic outcome resulting from surgery
- Repairing the site of the cancer the same day the cancer is removed
- Curing skin cancer when other methods have failed

How long will my surgery last?

The length of the surgery varies and depends on the extent of the skin cancer. You should expect to be in the office 1-4 hours. Most of your time will be spent in our waiting room while your tissue is in the lab undergoing processing. We provide beverages and snacks; and have free WiFi.



What should I bring with me?

Feel free to bring reading material, a laptop or tablet, warm attire, a friend or family member to keep you company, and some snacks.

What should I wear during my surgery?

Please wear comfortable loose clothing. A buttoned shirt is recommended as it can be easily removed and put back on without disturbing any bandages, depending on the surgery site.

Can I drive home after surgery?

You can drive home after your procedure. However, if your skin cancer is located on your face that would interfere with your driving visibility, we recommend you have someone drive you home. You will likely have a bulky pressure bandage applied after reconstruction which may obstruct your vision or prevent you from wearing your glasses. Your companion can stay with you in the office or pick you up when you are done. If you took an anxiolytic prior to surgery, then we prefer you have a ride home as well.

What should I do before surgery?

- Have a normal breakfast on the morning of surgery
- If your surgery is in the afternoon, eat lunch
- **If you are referred for reconstruction later that day with another surgeon, you will have to check ahead of time with that surgeon if you are allowed to eat that day.**
- All healing after surgery goes better if you are not smoking
 - We recommend to stop smoking 1 week before surgery and for 2 weeks afterwards

What medication can I take?

- Please review and update your medication list at least 1 week prior to your procedure
- If you had any joint replacement within the past 2 years or have an artificial heart valve, please let our clinical team know ahead of time so we can arrange for you to have the antibiotics to take prior to your procedure
- If you are taking **Coumadin, Jantoven, or Warfarin**, please notify our office as you may be required to complete blood work 7 days prior to your procedure.



What will happen after surgery?

- If the wound is closed with stitches, they will need to be removed in 1 to 2 weeks.
- Occasionally, the surgical site is left to heal as a secondary intention. Meaning a wound will be left open (rather than being stitched together) and left to heal by itself, filling in and closing naturally
- Please **DO NOT** schedule surgery near to a vacation, travel for work or a time when you will not be available for us to see you the suture removal/wound check
- In the event that a repair is required by a plastic surgeon, please follow up with that surgeon's office regarding your wound care.
- Please **AVOID** excessive activities involving bending or lifting greater than 10 lbs. and swimming for 2 weeks to allow proper healing of the wound (detailed wound care instructions will be provided)
- Most wounds are not painful after surgery. If there is discomfort, take an acetaminophen (Tylenol) based pain killer, not aspirin or ibuprofen based. If we suspect a wound will be more painful, we shall give you a prescription for a stronger pain killer
- Once wounds are healed and the stitches taken out, you may resume daily activities. And the scar will continue to heal and develop over the next 6-12 months.

We look forward to seeing you at your appointment!