

PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

ABOUT MOHS SURGERY:

Mohs Micrographic Surgery is a specialized method for the removal of skin cancer that combines surgery with real-time microscopic margin analysis. Mohs surgery is the most effective treatment for skin cancer today, offering the highest cure rate – up to 99% – even if the skin cancer has been previously treated by another method. Mohs surgery achieves this high cure rate because the cancer is removed with the highest precision while healthy skin and tissue are spared.

Mohs surgery is an outpatient procedure that requires only local anesthesia. Your surgeon will remove all visible skin cancer from the biopsy site, and a thin surrounding layer of skin. The surgeon will then carefully mark and examine this tissue under a microscope, looking for any traces of residual cancer. If cancer cells are seen, the surgeon will remove another thin layer of skin, but only from the area where cancer is still present. Normal skin will be spared. This process is repeated until no cancer remains. This is termed a “tissue sparing” technique, and allows the smallest amount of tissue damage when removing a cancer.

One of the advantages of Mohs surgery is that you know your results right away. You usually don't leave your appointment until all of the skin cancer has been removed and your wound repaired. You may have another visit with your surgeon or primary care provider to make sure your wound is healing correctly.

You can view the American College of Mohs Surgery instructional video about Mohs Surgery using the link below. Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera and click the YouTube link. Make sure your volume is on loud.



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Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Dermatology

BEFORE SURGERY:

- Refrain from smoking at least 2 weeks prior to surgery and 2 weeks after if possible. Smoking impairs proper wound healing, so the longer you stop, the better.
- Stop taking over the counter supplements unless prescribed by your doctor. These include **fish oil, vitamin E, garlic, ginger, and ginkgo biloba**. These substances can thin the blood and increase your risk of bleeding.
- Avoid drinking alcohol 24 hours before surgery because it may increase bleeding and your blood pressure the day of surgery.

THE DAY OF YOUR SURGERY:

- **Bring a driver with you** if your surgery is near your eye, on your scalp, hand, or foot, and if you take medication for anxiety.
- Shower and wash your hair.
- Eat a full meal prior to your arrival.
- Take all of your daily prescribed medications.
- Wear loose and comfortable clothing. If your surgery is on the upper portion of the body, wear an old button down shirt.
- Do not wear make-up or jewelry near the area to be treated.
- Beverages and snacks will be available. You are welcome to bring your own drinks and snacks with you, if you prefer. We recommend this if you have dietary restrictions.
- Bring something to read or do during the procedure, as it can take several hours. (Books, magazines, crosswords, knitting, etc... Wait times depend on the extent and size of the cancer, which affects how quickly the skin samples can be processed in the lab. **Plan to spend at least a half day in our clinic.**

AFTER SURGERY:

- Your Mohs surgeon will select the best plan of skin repair for you . Care instructions will be provided.
- During the week after surgery, smoking is prohibited, as this will affect the healing of the surgery site.
- It is normal to have some swelling, redness, and bruising around the wound after surgery. This will gradually disappear over the next 2 weeks or so. Also, there may be some bloody drainage from the wound. This should also stop after a few days.
- It is normal to have mild to moderate pain for 2-3 days following the procedure. This is generally controllable with over the counter pain relievers, ice, rest, and elevation. See the “Pain control” section on your wound care sheet for detailed instructions.
- If you work and your job is not strenuous, you can generally return to work after a few days, though there is some variation depending on your job and surgical site.

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SUGGESTED WOUND CARE MATERIALS:

Except for skin grafts, the dressing will need to be changed daily after the first 48 hours. The following materials may be needed after your surgery. **Wait to purchase these items until after surgery.** The number and type of supplies needed depends on the extent of your procedure.

Each of the following can be purchased at drug stores. Generic products are ok to use as well.

1. Vaseline or Aquaphor ointment
2. Gauze pads
3. Non-stick (e.g. Telfa) pads
4. Medical tape

