



What is Mohs Surgery?

Mohs surgery is an advanced surgical technique that precisely removes skin cancer while preserving healthy surrounding tissue. The procedure gets its name from its inventor, Dr. Frederic Mohs.

The Mohs technique allows us to remove all cancerous cells, including those that may go deeper like a tree's roots and would otherwise be hard to see, and spare as much healthy tissue as possible. For many skin cancers, Mohs surgery offers the highest cure rate (up to 99%).

Further information about Mohs surgery can be found at the websites below:

<https://www.mohscollege.org/for-patients>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5Paup_-S4A

What to Expect

Mohs surgery is an outpatient procedure that requires only local anesthesia. Here is what you can expect:

Step 1: We remove the tumor that is visible without a microscope with a 1-2 mm rim of surrounding skin.

Step 2: The tissue is frozen, processed, and placed on slides. This can take 1-2 hours. We then examine the tissue sample under a microscope and identify any sections with cancer cells.

Step 3: Steps 1 and 2 are repeated if necessary, but only for sections with cancer cells. While the exact approach depends on the tumor, it typically takes 1 to 3 rounds to make sure all the cancer is removed.

Step 4: Your surgeon discusses the best way to repair the surgical site — options include natural healing for small or shallow wounds, a straight line of stitches, and occasionally a flap from adjacent skin or a skin graft from other areas of the body. On rare occasions, you may be referred to another physician for the repair of the surgical site.

Preparing for Mohs Surgery

Prior to surgery

Please refrain from smoking at least two weeks before and after surgery.

Continue to take *all* medications prescribed or recommended by your doctor.

If you take any of the following additional supplements, please stop taking them one week prior to surgery to protect against raised blood pressure and increased bleeding:

- Ginkgo biloba
- Ginseng
- Garlic
- Vitamin E
- Vitamin C
- Fish oil
- Other herbal supplements

We ask that you not drink alcohol at least 24 hours before and after your surgery.

Day of surgery

On the day of surgery, we ask that you:

- Take a bath or shower, shampooing your hair and soaping the general surgical area to reduce the risk of infection
- Avoid makeup if the surgery is on your face
- Take all scheduled, prescribed medications (unless otherwise directed by our nurses) including blood pressure, diabetes, and cholesterol drugs (please bring a day's supply of each to your appointment)
- Eat a normal breakfast and/or lunch (depending on your appointment time)
- Wear warm, comfortable, loose-fitting clothing
- Bring food or snacks and something to pass the time such as a newspaper or book — be prepared to spend *at least* 3-4 hours through the morning and early afternoon, though the procedure length depends on the tumor's size, location and complexity
- Bring a relative or friend with you or arrange for someone to drive you home