

What is Skin Cancer?

Skin cancer is the most common malignant cancer in humans. There are several types of skin cancer: Basal Cell Carcinoma, Squamous Cell Carcinoma, and Malignant Melanoma. The majority of skin cancers are basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas, which are less likely to metastasize or cause death. Their pattern is to grow locally within the skin and destroy surrounding tissue. Melanoma, on the other hand, is able to metastasize and is more dangerous type of skin cancer. Malignant Melanoma is life threatening if not diagnosed and treated early. Occasionally, melanoma originates in moles which have been present for many years.

What is MOHS Micrographic Surgery?

MOHS surgery is a highly specialized treatment for the total removal of skin cancer. This method of treatment is performed by physicians with specialized training in its use since it requires detailed knowledge of skin anatomy, skin cancer, pathology, as well as advanced surgical skills. This method differs from all other methods of treating skin cancer by the use of detailed mapping techniques to allow the surgeon to remove all the roots and extensions of the skin cancer. A MOHS surgeon can pinpoint areas involved with the skin cancer that are otherwise invisible to the naked eye. Therefore, even the smallest microscopic roots of cancer can be removed. This results in the removal of as little of normal skin as possible and the highest

possibility of curing the cancer. Using MOHS surgery, the cure rate is more than 99% for most skin cancers, even when other forms of treatment have failed.

What are the advantages of MOHS Surgery?

By using these detailed mapping techniques and complete microscopic control, the MOHS surgeon can pinpoint areas involved with cancer that are otherwise invisible to the naked eye. Therefore, even the smallest microscopic roots of cancer can be removed. The result is: 1) the removal of as little normal skin as possible and 2) the highest possibility for curing the cancer.

How is MOHS Micrographic Surgery Performed?

MOHS surgery is performed in a pleasant out-patient surgical suite and you may return home the same day. Thin layers of cancer-bearing skin are removed and microscopically examined until a tumor-free plane is reached. Each surgical layer is carefully “mapped” by the surgeon so that its exact location can be pinpointed on the wound. Every layer of tissue removed is inspected under the microscope for evidence of cancer cells. Typically, as long as cancer cells are seen anywhere within the specimen, the surgeon continues to remove and examine tissue layers from that section of the wound until none is present.

How long does the surgery take?

Once the site is prepared, the initial surgical procedure typically takes only 15 to 30 minutes. It then takes at least 2 hours to prepare and microscopically examine the tissue for the first few stages. Several surgical stages and microscopic examinations may be required until a tumor-free plane is reached. You will be asked to remain for observation between stages, therefore, plan to be in the office all morning and into the afternoon. Certain surgeries may be staged over several different days based on the size and location of the cancer, and other personal constraints and necessities of the patient.

Will the surgery leave a scar?

Since MOHS surgery removes as little normal tissue as possible, scarring is minimized. After the skin cancer has been completely removed, a decision will be made on the best method for treating the wound created by the surgery. The site may be repaired the same day or at a later date. In addition to the repair, additional reconstruction may be necessary at a later date depending on the anatomic location, size of the cancer and excision size. Return visits will be scheduled for evaluation of the surgical site, bandage changes and removal of stitches.

We want you to be as comfortable, relaxed and informed as possible. Please do not hesitate to ask our medical team any questions you have about your surgery or follow-up care.

Dos and Don'ts for MOHS Surgery Preparation

DO:

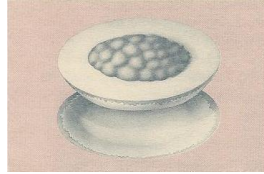
- Shower and shampoo the night before and the morning of the surgery.
- Eat normal meals before the surgery.
- Tell the doctor if you have any allergies to medicines or have a bleeding problem.
- Take all you regular medicines unless the doctor tells you not to.
- Wear an old shirt that buttons all the way down. Wear absolutely no jewelry. If you're having face surgery, wear absolutely no make up and have your hair pulled back away from the surgery site.
- Bring an old blanket and wear warm socks to the office.
- Have someone drive you home from the doctors office after surgery.

DON'T:

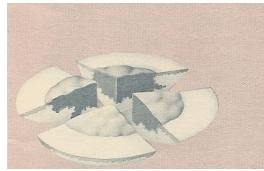
- Consume alcohol from one week before until one week after surgery.
- Have vitamin E, niacin, fish oil tablets, or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (Motrin, Nuprin, Advil, etc.) for one week before surgery. They may cause bleeding.
- Smoke within 2 hours before the surgery or have caffeine the day of the surgery.



Tumors may send tentacles of malignancy below the surface, beyond the visible boundaries.



Surgical removal of tumor, and margin of presumed healthy tissue around and below lesion.



Removed tumor is divided into segments, each of which is carefully oriented on a "map."



Microtome blade cuts tissue-thin section of removed tumor for microscopic examination.



Section on patient which microscopically showed malignancy in margin is operated on again.

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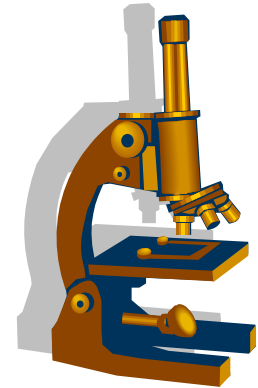
Treat And Protect

Michael W. Steppie, M.D.

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MOHS Micrographic Surgeon

MOHS Micrographic Skin Cancer Surgery



Associates in Dermatology
