

Information About Your Mohs Surgery

Your dermatologist has recommended that your skin cancer be treated with a specialized technique called Mohs micrographic surgery, which we provide in our Fishkill, Kingston, Hudson, Somers, Tarrytown, and Nanuet offices.

WHY MOHS SURGERY?

Mohs surgery is usually used to treat cancers in cosmetically sensitive areas, cancers that are unusually aggressive, or those that have recurred after more conventional treatments.

WHAT IS MOHS SURGERY?

The Mohs procedure involves surgically removing skin cancer layer by layer and examining the tissue under a microscope until healthy, cancer-free tissue around the tumor is reached. This allows the surgeon to remove the cancer with a minimum of damage to surrounding tissue.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT?

Initial removal of your skin cancer will be done under local anesthesia. You will then be asked to wait while the tissue is processed and examined under a microscope. This first stage can take from one to two hours. If more tissue needs to be removed then this process will be repeated, until all the cancer is removed. This is usually done in one or two stages, but sometimes can take several more. Therefore, we ask that you plan to be here all day.

Once all the skin cancer is cleared, you will be ready for closure of the wound. In the majority of cases, that will be done here on the same day. For certain large or cosmetically sensitive wounds, the wound will be dressed and we will arrange an appointment for it to be repaired by another specialist in a different location on the next day.

This can be a long day, and we want to make it as easy as possible for you. There is a television in an area of the waiting room, as well as WiFi Internet access. Feel free to bring a companion, an extra pillow, snack, reading material, knitting, or whatever you need to be comfortable. It is fine to leave the office to do a brief errand or visit a restaurant nearby.

OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How long will I be there? Most Mohs surgery is completed within two to four hours, but we ask that you make no other plans and be available to stay the entire day.

What should I wear? We suggest that you wear loose, comfortable clothing and avoid clothing that must be pulled over your head. Also, please do not wear make-up if the surgery is on your face.

Do I need to have someone drive me home? All procedures are done under local anesthesia, and therefore you will not be drowsy. A driver should not be necessary. You are welcome to bring a companion.

Do I need to stop my blood thinning medication or aspirin? We are able to perform your surgery safely while on these medications. Unless instructed otherwise by another physician, there is no need to discontinue these medications.

What about other medications? Please stop taking ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or naproxen (Aleve) about two weeks before surgery if you are taking these just for minor aches and pains. Acetaminophen (Tylenol) is a good substitute that does not increase bleeding. You may, however, safely stay on your pain medication if you need it to control your pain and Tylenol does not work for you. Also, please stop Vitamin E.

What can I expect after the surgery? You will have a dressing on the wound and will be given specific instructions regarding wound care. There should be minimal pain, for which you can take acetaminophen (Tylenol). You should be able to return to work within a day or two in most cases. Suture removal will be scheduled for about one week after the surgery.

How can I find out more? Visit the web site of the American College of Mohs Surgery at skincancermohssurgery.org. And please feel free to contact our Mohs surgery coordinators, Monica at 845-896-7730 x206 and Stephanie, at 845-896-7730 x201 if you have additional questions.