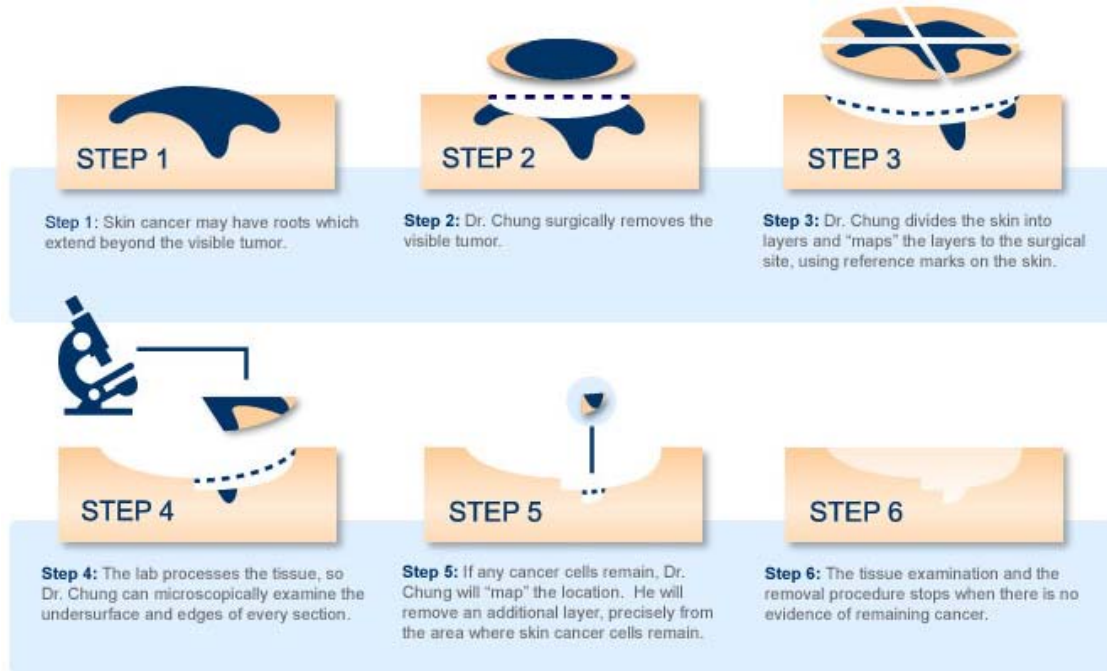


MOHS FAQ'S

What is Mohs?

Mohs surgery is the most advanced, specialized and effective treatment for skin cancer available today. Based on the technique developed by Dr. Frederic Mohs, the method has been refined over 70 years. The procedure removes individual layers of cancerous tissues which are examined under a microscope to ensure accurate tumor removal. This maximizes the cure rate for skin cancer while providing the best cosmetic result. Everything will be performed under local anesthesia to eliminate the systemic risks associated with general anesthesia. Patients will also recover from the procedure much faster.



Why have I been referred for Mohs surgery?

Several effective methods are available for the treatment of skin cancer. Mohs surgery is indicated for complicated tumors and has the highest cure rate for first time cancers as well as recurrent cancers.

Your physician has referred you for Mohs surgery because your skin cancer requires special treatment. More complicated skin cancers which benefit from Mohs include the following:

- Skin cancer located in a cosmetically sensitive area
- Skin cancer is recurrent, large or incompletely removed by another procedure
- Skin cancer is poorly demarcated
- Patient has history of multiple skin cancers in the same area

What should I look for in a Mohs surgeon?

The Mohs procedure is most effectively performed by specially trained surgeons who have completed a rigorous and selective post-residency fellowship. Surgeons with the highest degree of training available become members of the American College of Mohs Surgery. Membership is the "gold standard" in Mohs Micrographic surgery. This organization is different from the American Society for Mohs Surgery which does not require an intensive 1-2 year training fellowship. Only a few physicians in southern Colorado have completed a fellowship approved by the American College of Mohs Surgery.

Will it hurt?

When we start the procedure, you will be given local anesthesia with a small needle. This will sting and last for a few seconds. Everyone has a different tolerance for pain, but most patients find the remainder of the procedure is relatively painless.

Will I be hospitalized?

No. Mohs surgery is performed under local anesthesia in a pleasant outpatient surgical suite and you may return home the same day. A procedure performed under local anesthesia eliminates the risk of general anesthesia and minimizes recovery time. Hospital facilities are available, but rarely necessary.

How long will the surgery take?

The surgical procedure alone takes only 10-15 minutes. However, it takes 1-2 hours to prepare and microscopically examine the tissues. Several surgical stages and microscopic examinations may be required. Although there is no way to predict before surgery how many stages will be necessary, most cancers are removed in 3 stages or less. Magazines, television and beverages will be available. You may bring reading materials, work, portable music player or a personal computer. If your visit extends through the lunch hour, your companion may leave to bring you a snack or lunch. You are asked not to leave the premises until all surgical procedures are completed. The most difficult part of the procedure is waiting for the results of the surgery. Since we do not know in advance how much time is necessary to remove the cancer and repair the wound, we ask that you plan to be in the office, essentially, the entire day and that you make no other commitments. If surgery is performed around your eyes or on your hands, it is necessary that someone drive you home.

Will the surgery leave a scar?

Yes. Any form of surgery will leave a scar. Because Mohs surgery removes as little normal tissue as possible, scarring is minimized and this yields the best aesthetic outcome. Immediately after the cancer is removed, we will discuss options with you so we can try to provide the best cosmetic result.

What can I expect after surgery?

Expect to wear a pressure bandage and to keep the surgical area away from water for 48 hours. As with any surgical procedure, you may experience some swelling, pain, redness, or bleeding. If there is any discomfort, Tylenol is all that is usually necessary for relief. A prescription for a stronger pain medication will be written, if necessary. Most patients find that they do not need it.

When can I return to work?

We recommend that you not return to work the same day as your procedure. Although Mohs surgery is an out-patient surgery with local anesthesia, patients are often tired afterwards. Additionally, any activity that puts strain on your surgical site or elevate your blood pressure should be avoided immediately after surgery.

When can I exercise?

The resting period is based on the location and extent of your surgery. In general, we recommend avoiding strenuous activity for one week if the surgery was on your head or neck area. We recommend two weeks for the body or extremities.

Can someone be in the surgery room with me?

We ask all family members and friends to remain in the waiting area during the surgical procedure. However, when waiting for the tissue slides to be prepared between surgeries, one person may wait with you in the surgical suite.

PRE-OPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Medications: Please avoid medications which may thin the blood, unless instructed otherwise by your physician.

- Do not take any aspirin or aspirin containing products for at least 10 days prior to your surgery, if you take these products for pain or as a preventative measure. These products can thin the blood. If you have had a stroke or a heart attack, or if your cardiologist or primary care physician instructed you to take these products, please continue taking them.
- Do not take any other anti-inflammatory pills, headache or cold remedies, or Alka-Seltzer for 10 days prior to your surgery.
- Discontinue any vitamin supplements or herbal supplements 10 days prior to surgery. Vitamin E, ginko, garlic and other supplements have been shown to increase bleeding and bruising with surgery.

If your physician recommended that you take aspirin, please check with him/her before stopping your medication. If you take prescription medications, we ask that you check with your prescribing physician to determine whether it is safe for you to discontinue prescribed blood thinners such as Plavix, Coumadin, etc. Coumadin, only if approved by your prescribing doctor, should be discontinued 3 days before surgery.

Please consult your primary care physician prior to discontinuing any prescription medication. Please take your blood pressure medication the day before and on the day of the surgery.

Take all your routine medications, as you normally would, EXCEPT any that we have told you to stop. Tylenol does not increase bleeding and is fine to take.

Antibiotics: If you require antibiotic prophylaxis before dental procedures or other surgery, take your first dose of antibiotics 1 hour before coming to the office for your Mohs surgery. Please call your primary care physician or dentist to prescribe the antibiotics that you normally take.

Alcohol/Smoking: Alcohol can increase bleeding or bruising; please avoid alcohol for 24 hours before your surgery. Stop smoking ideally for at least 1 week before and 1 week after your procedure. Smoking will increase your risk of complications and infection from surgery.

Transportation: We encourage you to bring a companion along or to have someone available to pick you up after surgery. If someone does come with you to your appointment, please restrict yourself to one or two companions, as we have limited seating in the waiting room.

Breakfast/Lunch: Eat your normal breakfast or lunch the day of surgery. We also encourage you to bring any snacks, since we cannot predict how long the surgery will take.

Attire: Please wear comfortable clothing. Make sure that your shirt buttons in the front and does not slip over your head. No one-piece outfits. Please do not wear makeup, moisturizer, nail polish, or jewelry, if it will cover the surgical site. Women with cancer anywhere on the face, ear or neck should not wear makeup the day of surgery.

Scheduling: Please be prompt. If you are unable to keep the scheduled appointment for your surgery, please contact our office at least 48 hours in advance to reschedule: (719) 355-1585.

Feel free to bring a book, portable music player or personal computer the day of surgery.

WHAT TO EXPECT THE DAY OF SURGERY

After you have checked in with the receptionist, one of our medical assistants (MA) will greet you and take you to the treatment room where the Mohs procedure will be performed. The MA will take your blood pressure and ask about your medications, allergies, and medical history.

Dr. Vinh Chung will be in to greet you and will answer any questions you may have about the procedure. Please let Dr. Chung and his staff know if there is anything we can do to make you feel more comfortable.

Dr. Chung will use a small needle to inject local anesthetic to numb the skin. You will feel a small sting, which lasts only a few seconds. Once the numbing medication takes effect, the remainder of the procedure is more comfortable.

After the area is numb, Dr. Chung will remove a thin layer of skin with the visible cancer. This is called Stage I. This tissue is carefully mapped and coded by the surgeon and taken to an on-site laboratory where the technician will immediately process the microscope slides. You will have a temporary dressing placed over the wound while you wait in your surgical suite. Please be patient since the Mohs technique requires meticulous care. The surgical procedure alone takes only 10-15 minutes. However, it takes 45 minutes to prepare and microscopically examine the tissues.

If the microscopic examination indicates there is additional skin cancer, Dr. Chung will repeat the procedure for Stage II. Dr. Chung will only remove tissue from the areas still affected by skin cancer. The typical Mohs procedure requires two to three stages and is completed in half a day. However, depending on the skin cancer, the treatment can require many more stages. The number of stages required cannot be predicted in advance.

You may bring reading materials, work, portable music player or a personal computer. If your visit extends through the lunch hour, your companion may leave to bring you a snack or lunch. You are asked not to leave the premises until all surgical procedures are completed. The most difficult part of the procedure is waiting for the results of the surgery. Since we do not know in advance how much time is necessary to remove the cancer and repair the wound, we ask that you plan to be in the office, essentially, the entire day and that you make no other commitments.

When Dr. Chung has completely removed the skin cancer, he will discuss options to repair the wound. The best course of repair will depend on the size, depth and location of the wound. For the most complex wounds, Dr. Chung may involve other specialists to assist with the repair. In most instances, however, Dr. Chung will complete the repair. Upon completion of the surgery and repair, your companion may assist you home. Dr. Chung will prescribe pain medication in the event it is required.

An appointment will take place after surgery to evaluate the surgical site.