

Skin Cancer Overview

Skin cancer is the most common cancer in humans and affects men and women of all ages. More than 1 million cases of skin cancer are diagnosed every year and most are the direct result of exposure to the sun during our lifetime. Anyone can develop skin cancer, but most patients are fair skinned individuals who burn easily. Fortunately, most cases can be cured with early detection. However, skin cancers that are large or occur in high risk areas such as around the eyes, ears, nose and lips, or which recurred after previous treatment are more effectively treated using Mohs Micrographic Surgery.

What is Mohs Micrographic Surgery?

Dr. Frederick Mohs, a surgeon in Madison, Wisconsin, developed this highly specialized technique for the removal of skin cancer. It is only available in large medical centers.

The key features to this technique are:

- It is done in an outpatient operating room, with local anesthesia.
- A thin layer of skin encompassing all of the visible tumor is excised.
- A map, showing tissue orientation within the wound is drawn
- The entire margin of the excised tissue (via frozen sections) is examined using a microscope.
- If any tumor is found, another layer of skin is removed from the area still showing tumor. This is continued until no further tumor is present and the patient is free of disease.

Results after Mohs

The cure rates for Mohs excision of skin cancer is 99% of all basal cell skin cancers and 95% of all squamous cell skin cancers. Follow up is very important to detect the small percentage of recurrences, so you will need to be seen at

least annually by your dermatologist for 5-10 years to rule out the possibility of a recurrence.

Once the tumor has been completely excised, the surgeon will assess which reconstructive repair is cosmetically appropriate. At times, it is impossible to know the full extent and exact size of the skin cancer, and this knowledge will affect the decision. If special repair is necessary, we will discuss our recommendations with you, when the removal of the skin cancer has been completed. We have several reconstructive surgeons available to us.

Advantages of using the Mohs Technique

- This form of treatment has the highest cure rate of any type of existing procedure for the treatment of basal cell carcinoma and squamous cell carcinoma.
- The maximum tissue preservation is achieved.
- This technique has the lowest functional and cosmetic morbidity of any procedure.
- It is cost effective compared to other surgical options.
- ONE DAY OUTPATIENT SURGERY using local anesthesia