



MOHS MICROGRAPHIC SURGERY

Mohs micrographic surgery is an excisional surgical technique whereby locally invasive skin cancers anywhere on the body's surface are removed with the aid of the microscope. By visualizing microscopically the exact areas where in the skin a cancer is growing after sections of cancer-laden tissue are removed surgically, a Mohs surgeon is able to extirpate completely in a conservative fashion malignant skin growths. The technique of Mohs surgery removes only cancerous tissue while leaving normal, non-malignant tissue intact. Mohs surgery usually is performed under local anesthesia in an outpatient setting, making the procedure very safe for the elderly and those with complicated medical problems.

On the day of surgery and prior to tumor removal, local anesthesia is injected into the surface of the skin surrounding the skin cancer. By avoiding general anesthesia, the patient can be awake during the procedure, eliminating the need for potentially dangerous drugs given with general anesthesia. The tumor is then removed, along with a tiny margin of normal appearing tissue. The resulting surgical wound is then bandaged, and the patient waits in a recovery area while the excised tissue is processed for microscopic examination. Once ready, the surgeon examines the tissue under a microscope, inspecting the borders of the specimen to see if any cancer cells still remain. If the tumor has been completely removed, the resulting surgical wound can then be repaired, usually on the same day if time permits. A follow-up appointment is then required 1-2 weeks later to assess the healing of the reconstructed wound, and to remove stitches. Individuals, who have had skin cancer, should be vigilant and periodic self-skin examinations as well as see their dermatologist for annual total body skin examinations.

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