

Mohs micrographic surgery

What is Mohs surgery?

Named after Dr. Frederick Mohs, Mohs micrographic surgery offers the highest cure rates and is the best treatment for skin cancers in high-risk or sensitive areas (i.e. near the nose, lips or eyes), recurrent tumours or aggressive skin tumours. Mohs surgery includes the surgical removal of the skin cancer and the examination of the removed tissues under a microscope to ensure that the cancer is completely removed. This is a one-day, outpatient procedure that does not require an overnight stay in the hospital.

How does it work?

You will be awake during the procedure, which begins in the morning. The area around the skin cancer is frozen using local anesthetic. The skin and tissue around the obvious cancer is removed with a scalpel. A bandage is applied to the area and you go back to the waiting room. The doctor makes a map of the cancer site and the removed tissue is brought to the laboratory for processing which takes approximately one hour. The doctor studies the processed specimen under a microscope for the presence of cancer at the edges. You then return to the procedure room, where the results are reviewed and any area of remaining cancer is removed. This process is repeated until no residual cancer is found. Each time more tissue needs to be removed, there is an hour-long wait while the tissue is processed and examined. Once the skin cancer is removed and clear margins are confirmed, the area is surgically reconstructed and repaired. This can require a skin flap or graft. A bandage is then applied and post-operative instructions are reviewed before you go home.

How long will it take?

You will stay for the full morning and possibly into the afternoon. More difficult cases require more time to remove all of the cancer. You should plan no other activities for the day. A large portion of the time spent is waiting while your cancer is being processed in the laboratory so you may wish to bring some reading material, a bottle of water and some snacks. We strongly recommend you bring a friend or relative to wait with you throughout the day.

If you need to change or cancel your surgery, please notify our office 48 hours prior to your scheduled appointment at 416-530-6607.

Contact information

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