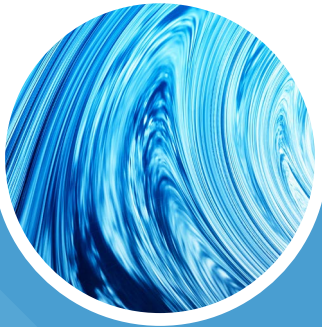


# Mohs Micrographic Surgery



Allina Health



This information will help you get ready for your Mohs micrographic surgery. If you have any questions or concerns, please call the dermatology nursing staff at 651-241-9700.

## **Mohs Micrographic Surgery**

Mohs micrographic surgery is a procedure used to treat skin cancer. It is commonly used for cancer that:

- has a high risk for coming back again
- has returned after being treated
- is found in areas such as the head, neck, hands and feet.

During surgery, the cancer tissue is removed and checked by your surgeon. If cancer remains, then additional excision stages are removed until all the cancer tissue has been removed.

The length of surgery will depend on how many excision stages of tissue need to be removed. Your surgeon won't know how many excision stages are going to be needed until the surgery has started. For most people, it usually lasts at least 4 hours.

It's best to plan that your surgery may take all day and not schedule other appointments for that day.

## Preparing for Surgery

- ☐ If you use tobacco, stop using it. Ask your primary care provider about the different ways to quit.
- ☐ Do not drink alcohol for 2 days before and 2 days after surgery.
- ☐ Do not plan any vacations, or plan to exercise, do yard work or heavy lifting for 1 to 2 weeks after surgery.
- ☐ Tell your surgeon if you:
  - are breastfeeding, pregnant or think you may be pregnant
  - have a latex allergy
  - have diabetes
  - take a blood-thinner medicine such as warfarin (Jantoven®), clopidogrel (Plavix®), enoxaparin (Lovenox®) or heparin
  - take any prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins or herbals
  - are immunosuppressed (weak immune system). You may need to take antibiotics before surgery.
- ☐ **Ask your surgeon which medicines you should take before surgery and when.**
  - Check with your surgeon if you are taking blood-thinning medicines (such as aspirin, warfarin, Plavix® or Ticlid®). You may need to have your INR level checked before surgery to make sure it is not too high.
- ☐ You may drive yourself to and from your appointment unless you have been given other instructions by your health care team.

You may have an adult friend or family member with you during surgery, if you wish. Please do not bring children.

## The Day of Surgery

- ☐ Eat a good meal before your appointment.
- ☐ Take any regular medicines the morning of your surgery, or as directed by your surgeon.
- ☐ Bring a list of your medicines with you to your appointment. Include prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbals. Include the name of the medicine, how much you take, and the last time you took the medicine.
- ☐ Bring any medicines you normally take during the day.
- ☐ Do not wear makeup, perfume or hair spray.
- ☐ Wear loose-fitting, comfortable clothing. Do not wear white shirts or blouses.
- ☐ Please arrive at your scheduled appointment time. You do not need to arrive early.

## What to Expect Before Surgery

- You will register at the front desk.
- A nurse will meet with you to complete your care plan and review what you can expect before and after your surgery. They will review your health history. You will be asked questions about any allergies you have and medicines you are taking.
- You will be asked to sign a consent form, if you haven't already done so.
- If you have questions or concerns, please ask a member of your health care team.
- A close-up photo will be taken of the area of your surgery site.
- Your surgeon will cleanse, mark and confirm the area of your surgery site with you.
- A local anesthetic (numbing medicine) will be injected into the surgery site to numb the area.

## **During Surgery**

- The visible cancer and some of the normal-appearing tissue around the cancer will be removed.
- Your surgeon will look at the tissue under a microscope. This process will take about 1 ½ to 2 hours of waiting time. During this time, a bandage will be placed on your skin and you will be asked to wait in the patient lobby.
- If cancer is found, additional cancer tissue will be removed. You will wait in the patient lobby while the tissue is being processed.
- After each excision stage of tissue is removed, your surgeon will look at the sample under a microscope and you will be asked to wait in the patient lobby.
- Your surgeon will continue to remove cancer tissue and look at them under a microscope until there is no more cancer found in the sample.
- When no more cancer is found, your surgeon will take another close-up photo of the area of your surgery site.
- Your surgeon may use stitches or staples to close the site. It is possible that you won't need stitches or staples and the site can heal by itself.

## After Surgery

- You may have some discomfort at the surgery site. You may take acetaminophen (such as Tylenol®). Follow the package instructions.
- You may have some bruising or swelling. This is normal.
- You may have a follow-up appointment within 1 week after your surgery. This appointment may be at a different location than where you had your surgery. Staff will help you with scheduling.
- You may return to your normal activities after 1 week, or as directed by your surgeon.

## Surgery Site Healing

- If you had stitches or staples, you will have a follow-up appointment to remove them in 1 to 2 weeks. The nurse will help you with scheduling.
- If you had dissolvable stitches, they will dissolve in 7 to 10 days. You do not need to come back to the clinic to have them removed.
- If you did not have stitches or staples, you can expect the surgery site to heal in 4 to 6 weeks.
- You will have a scar at the surgery site. Sometimes, a second procedure is needed to help the scar be less noticeable. This is usually done 4 to 8 weeks after surgery. Your scar will continue to heal for up to 12 months after surgery.



## Possible Risks

- bleeding
- infection
- pain
- temporary or permanent nerve injury that causes numbness

Your surgeon will talk with you about any specific risks before having surgery.

## When To Call Your Surgeon

Call your surgeon if you have:

- a temperature of 101 F or higher
- new pain or pain you cannot control
- bleeding that doesn't stop after you have put pressure on the area for 15 minutes, two times.
- signs of infection at your surgery site that get worse over 2 to 3 days:
  - pain
  - swelling
  - redness
  - odor
  - warmth
  - green or yellow discharge
- any questions or concerns.

## **Insurance Coverage**

It is important to understand your health care benefits before your treatment. Most insurance providers do cover the costs of Mohs micrographic surgery. Call your insurance provider to find out exactly what is and is not covered under your plan, and how much you have to pay yourself.





[allinahealth.org](https://allinahealth.org)

© 2023 ALLINA HEALTH SYSTEM. TM – A TRADEMARK OF ALLINA HEALTH SYSTEM.  
OTHER TRADEMARKS USED ARE OWNED BY THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS.  
THIS BOOKLET DOES NOT REPLACE MEDICAL OR PROFESSIONAL ADVICE; IT IS ONLY A GUIDE.

can-ah-26650 (4/23)