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MOHS SURGERY

What is it?

Mohs Micrographic Surgery (named after Dr. F. Mohs) refers to the surgical removal of skin cancer using microscopic examination to ensure, as much as possible, that the cancer is completely removed.

When is it done?

Mohs Micrographic Surgery is not done as a routine procedure. For most routine skin cancers, simple cutting out or scraping is done. The patients who come for Mohs Micrographic Surgery have been selected as having unusual or more difficult tumours because of their type, size, location, or failure of other techniques to produce a cure.

How does it work?

Your procedure begins in the morning and you will be awake during the procedure. The area around the skin cancer is frozen using local anesthetic. The skin and tissue around the obvious cancer is removed with a scalpel. This tissue is divided into smaller specimens which are prepared for examination. A map of the cancer site is made showing the relationship of the specimens which are then viewed under the microscope. During this preparation of specimens for microscopic examination, a temporary bandage is applied and you await the results in the waiting room (usually one hour).

The doctor studies the specimens for the presence of cancer at the edges. You then return to the operating area where any area of remaining cancer is cut out exactly as before. The process is repeated until no residual cancer can be found.

How long will it take?

Cancers may be present in skin, fat, muscle and, less frequently, in nerves, arteries, cartilage and bone. In more difficult cases, more time is required to remove all the cancer. It is not uncommon to stay for the full morning and into the afternoon (and you may be here all day). Some patients will require less time, and some more. You should plan no other activities for the day. Remember, a large portion of the time spent is waiting while your cancer is examined in the laboratory. Therefore, you may wish to bring some reading materials and snacks. A friend or relative may wait with you throughout the day.

What happens once the cancer is removed?

Once the skin cancer is removed, the area of removed tissue is reconstructed and bandaged. The nurse will provide you with post-operative instructions.

If you need to change or cancel your surgery, please notify our office at least 48 hours prior to your scheduled appointment at 289-301-3011