

MOHS SURGERY PATIENT GUIDE

Mohs surgery is a precise, highly effective treatment for certain skin cancers. It removes cancerous tissue while preserving as much healthy skin as possible. This guide explains what to expect before, during, and after your procedure.



WHAT IS MOHS SURGERY?

Mohs surgery is a specialized technique used to treat certain skin cancers. The surgeon removes the cancer layer by layer and examines it under a microscope until no cancer cells remain.



WHY WAS MOHS SURGERY RECOMMENDED FOR ME?

Mohs surgery is recommended for skin cancers that have a higher risk of coming back, have returned after previous treatment, or are in areas where preserving healthy skin is especially important (such as the face, ears, scalp, hands, or feet).



WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PROCEDURE?

Mohs surgery is typically performed in the office under local anesthesia. The process involves:

- 1 The visible cancer is removed along with a thin layer of surrounding tissue.
- 2 The tissue is mapped, processed in our lab, and examined under a microscope.
- 3 If any cancer cells remain, additional tissue is removed only where needed. This process is repeated until the cancer is completely removed.

You may relax in our waiting area between stages.



HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

Plan to be at our office for 4–5 hours. Many procedures are completed in 2–3 hours, but some require additional stages. The time needed cannot be known in advance.



WILL IT LEAVE A SCAR?

All surgery leaves a scar. Mohs surgery is designed to minimize removal of healthy tissue, which helps create the smallest possible defect and the best cosmetic outcome.



WILL I HAVE PAIN?

Most patients experience little to no pain during surgery because of the local anesthetic. Some soreness, swelling, or bruising can be expected afterward. Alternate ibuprofen and acetaminophen every 6–8 hours for pain as needed.



BEFORE SURGERY

- ✓ Eat a normal breakfast and take your usual medications unless instructed otherwise.
- ✓ Avoid aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin), naproxen (Aleve), and other NSAIDs for 7–10 days before surgery unless your prescribing doctor advises otherwise.
- ✓ Wear comfortable clothing.
- ✓ Bring a book, magazine, or other quiet activity.
- ✓ Plan to be here for several hours.
- ✓ Arrange for someone to drive you home if recommended by your surgeon.



AFTER SURGERY

- ✓ Follow all wound care instructions provided.
- ✓ Expect some swelling and bruising, especially around the eyes.
- ✓ Keep your head elevated and use ice packs as instructed to reduce swelling.
- ✓ Avoid strenuous activity for several days.
- ✓ Contact us if you experience heavy bleeding, increasing pain, redness, warmth, drainage, or fever.



HOW WILL THE WOUND BE REPAIRED?

After the cancer is removed, your Mohs surgeon will review your repair options with you. These may include:



Allowing the wound to heal naturally

Best for certain locations and smaller wounds.



Repair by our office

We will close the wound the same day.



Referral to a specialist

For more complex repairs, we may refer you to a plastic surgeon or a cancer center if needed.



PLEASE SILENCE OR TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE

To help maintain a calm environment and protect patient privacy, please silence or turn off your cell phone while in the surgery area. Thank you!



RECOMMENDED: HIBICLENS® (CHLORHEXIDINE)

Washing with Hibiclens® beginning two days before surgery may help reduce skin bacteria around the surgical site. Avoid contact with eyes, ears, and mouth. Follow the instructions on the product label.



QUESTIONS?

We are here to help. Please call our office with any questions or concerns.

361-882-5560



OUR OFFICE

4141 S. Staples St. Ste 300
Corpus Christi, TX 78411