



Carolina Dermatology of Greenville

Mohs Surgery

What is Mohs surgery?

Mohs surgery is a highly specialized way to totally remove skin cancer. This method is unique because it involves microscopic examination of all removed tissue and detailed mapping. As a result, the surgeon can remove cancer invisible to the naked eye while greatly limiting damage to healthy skin.

Mohs surgery cures up to 99 percent of skin cancer—and is still highly effective when other treatments have failed.

How can I prepare for surgery?

Even though Mohs surgery is performed on an outpatient basis, it still carries risks. **For the best outcome possible, please do the following beforehand:**

Two Weeks Beforehand

- Medications: Unless your doctor says otherwise, do not take aspirin or other over-the-counter pain medication except Tylenol (acetaminophen). Aspirin and other pain relievers such as ibuprofen (Advil) act as blood thinners and increase bleeding.
- **If you take blood thinners (for example, Coumadin), get your most recent INR (blood-clotting factor). Please call us with this information.**
- Vitamins and herbal supplements: Avoid them as some increase bleeding or bruising. Vitamin E, ginkgo, garlic and other products increase the risk of bleeding complications.
- Keep taking other medications prescribed by your doctor. If you have questions, please ask us.
- Stop smoking! Smoking increases your risk of complications from surgery and can delay your healing time.

Day of Surgery

- Avoid alcoholic beverages for 24 hours before surgery because alcohol can increase bleeding.
- Have someone drive you home, especially if you require a sedative.
- Eat a normal breakfast and take your normal medications.
- Bring snacks and a lunch along.
- Do not wear makeup (if facial surgery is planned).
- **Dress in layers and/or bring a blanket as the office can be chilly.**

What happens the day of surgery?

The surgeon will numb the area around the skin cancer and remove what is visible. The tissue then will be mapped, coded and brought to our on-site lab to examine.

This process (called “stages”) will be repeated until all cancer is removed. Although we cannot predict before surgery how many stages will be needed, most cases require no more than three.

Mohs surgery is performed in our outpatient facility, and patients return home the same day.

The surgical procedure lasts only 10 to 15 minutes. However, it can take up to two hours to examine the tissue removed at each stage. **Thus, please make no other commitments the day of surgery.** While magazines and Wi-Fi are available, you may want to bring other materials to pass the time while waiting.

Will the surgery leave a scar?

Yes. Any form of treatment will leave a scar. However, because Mohs surgery removes as little normal tissue as possible, scarring is minimal.

Several options are available to close the wound:

- Allow the wound to heal by itself
- Repair the wound with stitches
- Reconstruct the wound with a flap or graft
- Refer you to a plastic surgeon

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What should I expect after surgery?

You will have bandages and some discomfort for a few days. Usually, one or two return visits are needed to remove stitches and monitor healing. Afterward, you can return to your own doctor for routine check-ups.

A follow-up period of at least five years is essential. After having skin cancer, statistics show that you are at increased risk of developing more skin cancer. Skin examinations should be performed once or twice a year to evaluate the treated area and to check for new skin cancers.

The best protection from skin cancer is to avoid the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun.

Who performs the surgery?

Angela C. S. Hutcheson, MD, performs MOHS micrographic and dermatologic surgery. She was raised in New York City and attended Duke University in Durham, NC. Dr. Hutcheson attended the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) where she obtained her Doctor of Medicine (MD) degree.

After completing an internship in internal medicine at MUSC, she went on to do a residency in dermatology at MUSC. Dr. Hutcheson continued her training at Emory University in Atlanta, where she completed a fellowship in Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Surgery. She joined Carolina Dermatology of Greenville in 2007.

Dr. Hutcheson is board-certified in Dermatology and fellowship-trained in Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Surgery. She is a member of numerous professional societies, including the American Academy of Dermatology, American College of Mohs Surgery, American Society for Dermatologic Surgery, American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery and American Society for Laser Medicine & Surgery. She has served on several elected and voluntary positions within these organizations. Dr. Hutcheson has been published in the *American Academy of Dermatology*, *Dermatology Surgery*, *The Skin Cancer Foundation Journal* and other medical journals.

Questions?

Please call our office at **(864) 233-6338** if you have questions about this information.