



Mohs Micrographic Surgery Information

Mohs Micrographic Surgery is the most advanced and effective treatment for skin cancer available today. The procedure is performed by experienced physicians who have completed a year of additional training beyond Dermatology residency that is specific to this procedure. During the Mohs fellowship, physicians are trained in surgery, pathology, and reconstruction techniques.

With the Mohs technique, physicians are able to see beyond the visible tumor, to precisely identify and remove the entire tumor layer by layer while leaving the surrounding healthy tissue intact and unharmed. As the most exact and precise method of tumor removal, it minimizes the chance of re-growth and lessens the potential for scarring or disfigurement.

The Mohs procedure will begin in the morning and typically takes from one to several hours to complete, depending on the size and extent of the tumor. The entire procedure is done under local anesthesia (avoiding all risks associated with general anesthesia) and is virtually pain free. During the procedure, the physician removes all cancerous cells and only the minimum amount of healthy tissue surrounding the disease. The physician systematically removes thin layers of tissue and examines it under a microscope for malignant cells. This process is repeated until no cancerous cells are found in the removed tissue. The physician then closes the wound using reconstructive techniques resulting in as little scarring as possible.

Mohs Micrographic Surgery offers patients several advantages over other methods. Mohs surgery preserves more healthy tissue than any other method while allowing the physician to remove cancerous cells that are invisible to the naked eye. The Mohs technique is the treatment of choice for cancers on the face and other sensitive areas where the preservation of normal tissue is essential. In addition to these benefits, the cure rate utilizing Mohs surgery is nearly 99% -- higher than any other method used today for removing skin cancer.

For more information on Mohs Micrographic Surgery, please contact Skagit Valley Medical Center's Dermatology Department at (360) 814-6200.