

~ Mohs Surgery – A Most Effective Cure for Skin Cancer ~



Timothy M. Jochen, M.D.

When you first learn that the shiny bump on your arm or scaly patch on your head is actually skin cancer, it can be a little nerve wracking. The good news is the aberration is likely one or the other of the two most common forms of skin cancer – namely, a basal cell or squamous cell carcinoma. The even better news is both varieties respond extremely well to a surgical treatment known as Mohs. This highly specialized and precise technique offers the highest cure rate among treatments for skin cancer.

Mohs also aims to preserve as much healthy skin as possible for maximum cosmetic results.

An enduring method

Mohs micrographic surgery was first developed in the 1930s by Dr. Frederic Mohs. While new skin cancer treatments are constantly being developed, Mohs has stood the test of time and required very few refinements. I frequently recommend it in more aggressive or invasive skin cancer cases because a surface lesion may only represent the “tip of the iceberg” problem-wise. Once a biopsy is performed, it could be a patient’s skin cancer is no longer even visible. A good analogy is to think of cancer cells as being similar to tree roots. Just as tree roots grow downward and outward into the earth, so do cancer cells grow downward and outward into the layers of the skin.

Layer by layer

Such an in-depth problem requires an insightful solution. That’s where Mohs comes in. The beauty of Mohs surgery lies in its precise nature. Rather than remove a large area of skin tissue blindly, I

use the Mohs technique to zero in and remove a visible tumor along with a thin layer of surrounding tissue. The tissue is then examined under a microscope and if any evidence of cancer is revealed, I’ll go back in and remove another thin layer of tissue



from the same area. The procedure continues in this manner until all samples are shown to be free of cancer. Typically, most tumors require one to three stages for complete removal.

Mohs surgery is performed as an outpatient procedure in our office. Patients remain awake the entire time while a local anesthesia is administered around the area of the tumor. The whole process can take a few hours. You can read, watch TV or bring your headphones to listen to music or a podcast. We do everything we can to make our patients as comfortable as possible.

A winning technique

Painstaking though it may be, the results are well worth it. Mohs surgery is shown to be successful at eradicating basal cell and squamous carcinomas in almost 100% of cases.



Before



After

While scarring is an inevitable possibility following any surgical treatment for skin cancer, Mohs, minimally invasive technique lessens its extent. That’s why Mohs is especially good for patients suffering from carcinomas in highly visible spots like the face and upper body.

Between its high cure rate and pleasing cosmetic results, Mohs is a win-win.

Contour Dermatology Locations

Rancho Mirage
Palm Springs

42600 Mirage Road
1180 North Indian Canyon Drive Suite E-419

760-423-4000
760-423-4000

888-977-SKIN