



MODERN DERMATOLOGY

WESTPORT, CT

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**MOHS MICROGRAPHIC SURGERY
PRE/POST CARE**

Preparation for Surgery:

- Do not consume excessive amounts of alcohol for 5 days prior to surgery.
- Eat your usual breakfast, if you typically skip breakfast have a morning snack the day of surgery.
- Take all of your regular medications unless directed by your surgeon or your regular physician. If you take any medicine containing aspirin, ibuprofen, pain medications, anti-inflammatory medications, arthritis medications or blood thinners please call the office to discuss.
- Please inform Dr. Eickhorst if you have a pacemaker, defibrillator, artificial joint or if you take antibiotics before dental procedures.
- Wear comfortable, loose clothing that you can get in and out of easily Avoid pull over clothing. If necessary, we may give you a gown to wear during the procedure.
- Please leave the whole day available for surgery: surgery time can be anywhere from two to six hours. This includes the time that is necessary for our laboratory to process your tissues and will allow you enough time to recover from the procedure.
- We encourage you to have a driver, who can safely return you home.
- Bring something to read and something to eat and drink since you will be with us for several hours.

What to Expect During Surgery:

- Mohs Micrographic Surgery is performed in a procedure room under sterile conditions with local anesthesia. Once anesthesia is complete, the visible portion of the tumor is removed by excision or scraping with a sharp instrument called a curette.
- Following the removal of most of the tumor, a thin layer, encompassing the complete undersurface of the tumor is excised. That layer is then cut into small pieces and a map is drawn to identify the location of each piece. The edges of the piece are marked with dyes to aid in the orientation on our map. Each piece is then frozen, and these slices are cut, stained and examined under the microscope. Any areas in which the tumor is found are marked on the map regions with remaining tumor tissue are then re-excised. This procedure is repeated until no more tumor is found and the cancer is entirely removed. After each layer of tissue is obtained, oozing or bleeding vessels are cauterized or ligated with suture. A pressure dressing is applied. You may rest in the waiting area with your relative or friend.
- It takes 15-30 minutes to remove each layer of tissue and 1-2 hours to process and examine it. Most tumors require the removal of three layers, extensive tumors may require more surgery/a second visit, but this is a rare occurrence.
- When surgery is complete, the wound will be closed based on its extent – some require sutures and some more superficial cases will heal on their own.
- If a wound requires reconstruction, we will discuss it with you following the complete removal of the cancer and appropriate recommendations and referrals will be made at that time.

What to Expect After Surgery:

Your surgical wound will require wound care during the weeks following surgery. You will have some swelling, bruising and redness around the wound. This will gradually disappear over the two weeks following. You should plan on wearing a bandage and avoid strenuous physical activity for at least 2 weeks. You may experience a sensation of tightness across the area of surgery. Skin cancer can frequently involve nerves and months may pass before your skin sensation returns to normal. In some cases, numbness may be permanent. You may also experience itching after the wound has healed. Complete healing of the surgical scar takes place over 12-18 months. Especially during the first few months, the site may feel swollen or lumpy and there may be redness. Gentle massage of the area (starting about one month after surgery) and keeping the area lubricated with lotion will speed the healing process. Avoiding sun exposure to the wound site is also critical for optimal healing.

****Do not consume excessive amount of alcohol for 48 hours after surgery; alcohol is a blood thinner and consumption can lead to post-operative bleeding.****

Bleeding

Expect slight swelling, tenderness and redness at the surgical site. There can also be a drainage that is clear to slightly blood tinged. You may experience some mild pain or discomfort at the surgical site. These symptoms are your body's normal reaction to injury and will subside after a day to a few days after the procedure. A small amount of bleeding/ooze from the surgical site may occur but should be minimal.

If more than a very small amount of bleeding occurs, apply firm constant pressure on the bandage for 15 minutes. If a bulky dressing has been applied, do not remove it. Do not discontinue pressure to see if bleeding has stopped until the 15 minutes has elapsed. If the bleeding continues, continue to press directly on the wound with an additional clean gauze pad for an additional 15 minutes. If bleeding continues, call our office or go to your local emergency room.

Pain

Mild to moderate pain is normal for a day or two following surgery, but it generally responds well to oral medications such as extra strength Tylenol. Do not use aspirin or arthritis pain medications such as Motrin, Advil or ibuprofen because they can cause bleeding. If regular pain medications aren't sufficient to control the pain, please contact our office. Ice packs also help alleviate pain. Apply an ice pack for 20 minutes of each hour while resting.

Daily Wound Care:

1. Wash surgical site with soap and water; use enough pressure to remove any scab that may be forming.
2. Dry wound by blotting with clean cloth or 4x4 gauze pad as directed.
3. Apply thin layer of Mupirocin®, Vaseline or Aquaphor with Q-tip as directed. NO NEOSPORIN, POLYSPORIN or Peroxide.
4. Cover with clean dry dressing until drainage ceases or until directed at your post-surgical visit.

PLEASE NOTE: Dissolving stitches require no wound care. Although you will not need your stitches removed you may however be asked to return to the office for a follow up visit to check your progress.

Infection

Infection is rare when wound care instructions are followed. If you are experiencing symptoms of infection such as warmth, increased swelling, pus/discharge, redness that is increasing and/or streaking or fever, please call the office.