

Mohs Micrographic Surgery

You have a skin tumor that needs to be removed, and you and your doctor have chosen Mohs surgery for this. During Mohs surgery, the tumor is taken out in small steps while you are numbed with local anesthesia. This might take a few stages to make sure all of the tumor is completely removed. While you wait, the doctor will look at the removed skin tissue under a microscope to check that all the cancer cells have been taken out.

BENEFITS OF MOHS SURGERY

- **High Cure Rate:** Mohs surgery has the best success rate for treating many skin tumors, like basal cell carcinoma (99%) and squamous cell carcinoma (94%). The success rate can depend on things like the size and location of the cancer, your overall health, and if you've had treatment before. Even with Mohs surgery, the cancer could come back, and sometimes other treatments might be needed.
- **Preservation of Healthy Tissue:** Mohs surgery helps keep more of your healthy skin, which means less scarring. But remember, all surgeries will leave some kind of scar.

RISKS

We can't list every possible problem, but here are some common risks or complications:

- **Tumor Recurrence:** The tumor might come back later, though this is rare.
- **Infection:** The surgery site might get infected and you might need antibiotics.
- **Bleeding:** There could be bleeding at the surgical site.
- **Fainting:** Let us know if you are prone to fainting.
- **Sensory Nerve Damage:** Skin surgery can damage sensory nerves, changing how you feel at and around the surgery site. This often gets better in a few months, but sometimes it can cause lasting numbness or tingling.
- **Motor Nerve Damage:** This is rare, but if it happens, it might make it hard to move certain muscles, usually in the face. For example, it could affect muscles that raise your eyebrow or curl your lip.
- **Scarring:** Any surgery will leave a scar. The size of the scar depends on the size and location of the tumor. Sometimes scars can be raised or thick, but this is rare on the face. Sometimes a second procedure is needed to fix a scar.
- **Necrosis:** This is the loss of the surgical repair. If your surgery involves a flap or graft, there's a risk of the repair not healing properly. Smoking can make this more likely.
- **Allergic reaction:** There's a small risk of an allergic reaction to medications, including local anesthesia. Let the doctor and staff know if you have any known allergies. Serious reactions are rare but can be severe.