

MOHS SURGERY – *What to Expect Before, During and After Your Surgery*

What is Mohs Surgery?

Mohs Surgery is a highly specialized treatment for the total removal of skin cancer. Mohs Surgery is named in honor of Dr. Frederic Mohs, the physician who developed the technique. This method differs from other methods of treating skin cancer by the use of microscopic examination of all of the tissues removed surgically as well as detailed mapping techniques which allow the surgeon to remove only the areas involved with cancer.

What are the Advantages of Mohs Surgery?

By using detailed mapping techniques and complete microscopic evaluation, the Mohs surgeon can pinpoint areas involved with cancer that are otherwise invisible to the naked eye. Therefore, even the smallest microscopic roots of cancer can be removed. The results are:

- *The removal of as little skin as possible*
- *The highest success rates of curing skin cancer*

What are My Chances of Cure?

Using Mohs Surgery the percentage of cure is more than 99% for many skin cancers, even when other forms of treatment have failed. Other methods of treatment may offer only a 50% chance of success if previous treatments have failed.

What Happens the Day of Surgery?

Your appointment will be scheduled early in the day. Our staff will escort you into a surgical suite where the surgeon will numb the area around the skin cancer. Once it is numb the visible cancer and a thin layer of tissue will be removed. This tissue is carefully mapped and coded by the surgeon and taken to the adjacent laboratory where the technician will immediately process the microscope slides. You will have a temporary dressing placed over the wound and you will return to the waiting room.

The surgical procedure alone takes only 10-15 minutes. However, it takes a minimum of 1-2 hours to prepare and microscopically examine the tissues.

Several surgical stages and microscopic examinations may be required and you will be asked to wait in the patient waiting area between stages. Although there is no way to predict before surgery how many stages will be necessary, most cancers are removed in 3 stages or fewer.

You may want to bring reading material to occupy your time while waiting for the microscopic slides to be processed and examined. Magazines and beverages will be available in the waiting room area. If your visit extends through the lunch hour, your companion may leave to bring you a snack or lunch. **You are asked to not leave the building until your procedure is complete for the day.**

The most difficult part of the procedure is waiting for the results of the surgery. Since we do not know in advance how much time is necessary to remove the cancer and repair the wound, **we ask that you plan to be in the office the entire day and make no other commitments.**

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 minimized. Immediately after the cancer is removed, we may choose to:

1. *Leave the wound to heal itself.*
2. *To repair the wound with stitches.*
3. *To reconstruct the area with a skin graft or flap. The decision is based on the safest method that will provide the best cosmetic result.*

Will I Be Able to Drive Myself?

If you feel you will be anxious during your procedure, we can provide you with medication to help you relax. In this case you would need a driver. Otherwise you will be fine to drive. Patients with high blood pressure may be offered medication to help them relax and lower the risk of bleeding. In this case you will **not** be allowed to drive home. Please restrict your companions to 1-2 as we have limited seating in the waiting area.

Will I Have Pain After the Surgery?

If you have any discomfort, Tylenol is often all that is necessary. A prescription for a stronger pain medication will be written if necessary.

Will I Have a Bandage?

Yes. Most patients can expect some sort of bandage for a week. We will provide detailed wound care instructions. Wound care information is also available on our website.

Will My Insurance Cover the Cost of the Surgery?

We are contracted with many insurance companies including Medicare but not Medicaid. We file insurance for our patients as a courtesy, however it is the patient's responsibility to know his/her insurance benefits. Expenses not covered by insurance would include insurance deductible, co-insurance and copays. Please remember that your insurance is a contract between you and your provider and some plans have limited benefits (e.g. hospitalization-only coverage).

We have an Ambulatory Surgery Center associated with our practice and depending on what type of closure/reconstruction is needed, you may be admitted to our surgery center for the repair. In this case there would also be a charge for the doctor's fee/fees, as well as the surgery center fee, which is also dictated by your agreement with your insurance company. If you do not have healthcare coverage, please discuss payment options with the business office staff.

Preparing for Surgery

Medications:

One to two weeks before surgery, stop taking any aspirin or over-the-counter pain medication products except Tylenol. (acetaminophen). Aspirin and other products such as Ibuprofen (Advil) act as blood thinners and increase bleeding. Also discontinue any vitamins or herbal supplements as certain products can increase bleeding and bruising. Vitamin E, fish oil, garlic, ginkgo and other products have been shown to increase the risk of bleeding complications.

If you are taking a blood thinner: Check with your prescribing physician to make sure it is safe to temporarily hold your blood thinning medication.

Continue any other medications prescribed by your physician.

If you take high blood pressure medication, please continue to take it as high blood pressure increases bleeding.

Avoid alcohol for 12 hours before surgery as alcohol can increase bleeding.

Stop Smoking! Smoking will increase the risk of complications from your surgery. Smoking can also interfere with normal wound healing and we want you to recover as quickly as possible.

Scheduling

You will be seen for a pre-operative appointment before your surgery.

Our patient portal will allow you to complete your medical information via the website. The scheduling staff will give you a user name, password and instructions.

We start most surgeries early in the morning as we do not know how long the entire procedure will take.

The Morning of Surgery

Breakfast: Eat your normal breakfast.

Please do not wear makeup, nail polish or jewelry if it will cover the surgical site. People with cancer anywhere on the face, ears or neck should not wear makeup the day of surgery. Also, avoid using moisturizers on the surgical area the day of surgery.

Take your usual medications except any blood thinners, vitamins or herbal supplements as mentioned above.

After Surgery

Will I need to come back?

Usually one or two return visits are needed to examine the healed surgical site. Afterwards, you may return to your referring physician for routine check-ups. If you live far away, we may be able to arrange follow-up with your referring physician.

A follow-up period of 5 years for the treated cancer is essential. After having one skin cancer, statistics show that you have a higher chance of developing a second skin cancer. You should have your skin checked by your referring physician at least once each year, not only to examine the treated skin cancer, but also to check for new skin cancers.

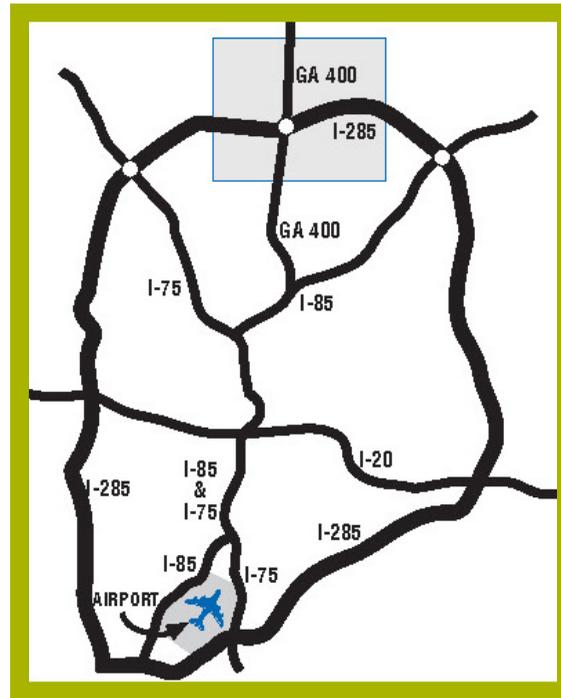
How can I protect myself from developing more skin cancers?

The best protection against skin cancer is to avoid the harmful ultraviolet rays of the sun. Even if you tan easily, the sun can contribute to skin cancer. Sunlight damages the genes that control cell growth. Sunlight also impairs the body's immune system, allowing early cancers to grow unchecked.

Minimize your exposure:

- Use a sunscreen - any brand - with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 when you spend any time in the sun. Areas exposed daily to the sunlight (such as face, ears, neck, forearms and hands) should be protected every day because these areas accumulate much more sun damage than areas only occasionally exposed. Use a waterproof sunscreen if you are swimming or perspiring.
- If possible, avoid sun during mid-day hours (10 am - 4pm).
- Do not assume that you are "not getting any sun" on cloudy days - most harmful ultraviolet (UV) light penetrates easily through the clouds.

For more information visit our website at:
atlantadermsurgery.com



DIRECTIONS:

From the East/Northeast:

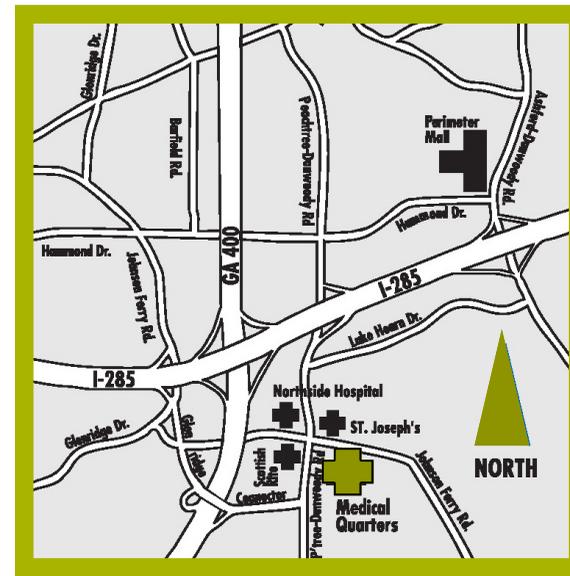
Take I-285 West to exit 28, Peachtree-Dunwoody Rd. Take a left at the exit and go through 4 lights. After you cross over Johnson-Ferry Rd., take your first left into the entrance of The Medical Quarters office complex at 5555 Peachtree-Dunwoody Rd.

From the West/Northwest:

Take I-285 East to exit 26, Glenridge Dr. Turn right off the exit ramp and go straight through 4 lights. Turn left at the 5th light onto Peachtree-Dunwoody Rd. Then turn at the 2nd driveway on the right into The Medical Quarters office complex at 5555 Peachtree-Dunwoody Rd.

From the North:

Take GA 400 south to exit 3, Glenridge Connector. Turn right off the ramp onto the Glenridge Connector. At the 3rd light, take a left onto Peachtree-Dunwoody Rd. Turn at the 2nd driveway on the right into The Medical Quarters office complex at 5555 Peachtree-Dunwoody Rd.



From the South:

Take GA 400 North to exit 4A, Glenridge Connector. Turn right off the ramp onto the Glenridge Connector. At the 2nd light, take a left onto Peachtree-Dunwoody Rd. Turn at the 2nd driveway on the right into The Medical Quarters office complex at 5555 Peachtree-Dunwoody Rd.

Parking:

The Medical Quarters building faces Peachtree-Dunwoody Rd. Therefore, upon entering the parking lot, follow the signs around the building for the main entrance to the front of the building. A handicap entrance is located on the backside of the building on the 1st floor.

There is ample parking available at The Medical Quarters. Unfortunately, we **DO NOT** validate parking, although the pharmacy in the building will validate parking if you get your prescription filled there.

The Medical Quarters is a totally non-smoking facility. No one may smoke in the building or parking lot. **Our office is located on the 2nd floor, Suite 206.**



Mark F. Baucom, M.D.
Mary Alice Mina, M.D.

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Your Appointment:

Name: _____
Pre-op: _____
Surgery: _____

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY PRIOR
TO YOUR SCHEDULED
APPOINTMENT