



Your Day of Mohs Micrographic Surgery

Mohs surgery is a specialized, precise surgical technique used to treat skin cancer. It involves removing the visible cancer and examining each layer of tissue under a microscope in real time until all cancer cells are gone, while preserving as much healthy skin as possible. Below is a brief overview of what to expect throughout your day:

1. Your medical history will be updated, biopsy results and photographs reviewed. Dr. Epstein's team will answer any questions prior to proceeding with consent for the procedure.
2. The site will be cleaned, marked, measured, and photographed.
3. Local anesthesia will be used to numb the site, similar to what was used during your original biopsy.
4. Dr. Epstein will obtain the skin sample (this is the Mohs layer or "stage") which will be taken to the laboratory.
5. Next, you may hear buzzing from the cautery or another modality we use to control the bleeding. A temporary compressive bandage will be applied while the tissue is being processed in the lab.
6. You will proceed to our reception area where you can eat, read, or watch TV. Meanwhile, the skin layer is processed in a certain orientation to allow Dr. Epstein to examine 100% of the margins. This is the most time-consuming part of the process. On average, this takes 45 to 60 minutes depending on the size of the specimen.
7. Once the tissue is examined by Dr. Epstein, you will be informed if another deeper/wider layer must be taken or if the cancer has been completely removed. Cases may require more than 1 layer in order to clear the cancer. As the number of layers is determined by the location and growth of the cancer, be prepared to spend at least 2-5 hours with us.
8. Once the cancer is completely removed, Dr. Epstein will discuss the repair options with you. Most of the time sutures (stitches) are required, but sometimes the best course of action may be to let the area heal by itself (secondary intention, similar to the biopsy), or even to coordinate with a plastic or oculoplastic surgeon.
9. A follow-up appointment is usually scheduled for wound check and/or suture removal.