



DR KWAN ZHENLI
CONSULTANT DERMATOLOGIST AND MOHS
SURGEON

MOHS MICROGRAPHIC SURGERY

1. What is Mohs micrographic surgery?

Mohs micrographic surgery is a type of skin cancer surgery developed by Dr Frederic Mohs. This surgery is indicated for certain kinds of skin cancers such as basal cell carcinoma or squamous cell carcinoma, depending on the type, location or size of the tumour. Your doctor will discuss the need for this surgery and alternative treatment options available before proceeding.

During the surgery, the cancer is removed one layer at a time with a small margin of normal skin and the layer is immediately examined under the microscope. Further layers are taken if there is evidence of cancer cells until the whole cancer has been fully removed.

The advantages of this procedure are a higher rate of complete removal of the skin cancer with a smaller resultant wound.

2. Who will perform the procedure?

Your dermatologist will perform the procedure. Other specialists such as plastic surgeons, head/neck surgeons or ophthalmologists may be required to provide support in more complex cases.

3. How will the procedure be done?

Mohs micrographic surgery is generally a day procedure. The part of the skin cancer which can be seen will be marked and that area including a margin of normal skin around it will be injected with local anaesthesia and removed. A dressing will be applied while the tissue is examined for tumour cells. If the tumour cells remain, further layers may be removed and the process repeated until no more tumour is seen under the microscope.

After the skin cancer has been removed, the wound may be left to heal naturally, closed directly with stitches, closed with a flap or graft from another area of skin, or repaired by another surgeon if the case is complex. If the repair surgery is scheduled for later, dressings will be applied and you will be given an appointment for the repair surgery and provided with further information.

The information provided in this document is intended as an resource only and should not be used as a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment. Please consult your health care provider before making any health care decisions or for guidance about a specific medical condition.



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4. How effective is this surgery?

Cure rate for new skin cancers can be up to 99% and for recurrent tumours up to 95%.

5. What are the risks and potential complications of this surgery?

- a. Bleeding or bruising
- b. Scarring
- c. Infection
- d. Nerve damage (may result in numbness, tingling or weakness)
- e. Recurrence of skin cancer
- f. Skin discolouration
- g. Allergic reaction
- h. Further surgery
- i. Delayed wound healing

6. What do I need to tell my doctor before the surgery?

Please inform your doctor of any allergies, medical problems and current medications that you are on.

7. What should I do after the surgery?

Please keep the dressing as instructed. You will have to keep the area as clean and dry as possible. You may also be prescribed with a course of antibiotics if needed.

In the event of any wound issues such as bleeding, please seek medical attention at the Emergency Department and inform the doctor on duty that you have undergone this surgery under the Dermatology team.

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