



MMC Dermatology & Mohs Surgery Department

Surgery Information Sheet

Welcome

Welcome to the Murfreesboro Medical Clinic Dermatology & Mohs Surgery Department. We are pleased you selected our facility for your surgical care. Our entire team's goal throughout the day is to provide you with the highest quality care and expertise that you deserve and expect.

This information sheet has been created to complement our personal communication. It will help acquaint you with our Mohs Surgery Unit and give you a better understanding of how your surgical day will go. Please read this information sheet prior to your surgery day to help prepare you to have a **smooth appointment**. We take the utmost pride in our team's training and professional capabilities. Please do not hesitate to contact us regarding any questions you have. We always welcome any suggestions you may have regarding our Mohs Surgery Unit that can improve the care you receive. It is important that all our patients are well informed, comfortable, and confident in the care they receive.

If for any reason you are unable to keep your scheduled appointment, please notify our office 24-48 hours in advance to avoid a cancellation fee. Not cancelling prior to your appointment could result in a \$50-\$100 no show fee depending on your scheduled services.

Our Mohs Surgeon

Karen Arnaud, MD, FAAD, FACMS is fellowship-trained in Mohs Micrographic Surgery, Dermatologic Oncology, and Reconstructive Surgery. Dr. Arnaud graduated from Louisiana State University. She obtained her medical degree at Louisiana Health Sciences Center in New Orleans where she received the Henry W. Jolly Jr. Award in Dermatology. She completed her dermatology residency at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in Nashville, TN where she served as chief resident. She completed her fellowship training in Mohs Micrographic Surgery, Dermatologic Oncology, and Reconstructive Surgery at Vanderbilt under the direction of Anna Clayton, MD, Allison Hanlon, MD and Stacy McMurray, MD.

Dr. Arnaud is a member of the American Academy of Dermatology and American College of Mohs Surgery.



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Mohs Surgery?

A highly specialized treatment for the total removal of skin cancer. The procedure is named in honor of Frederic E. Mohs, MD who developed the technique in the 1930s. Mohs surgery eliminates the guesswork used with all other methods of treating skin cancer. Other methods rely on a pathologist to sample the tissue removed by the surgeon and determine if the cancer was removed in its entirety. However, this method samples and examines less than 1% of the margins or edges of the specimen. Therefore, the surgeon must take wider margins of normal skin to minimize the chance of leaving cancer cells behind. Mohs surgery differs by examining 100% of the surgical margins. This allows the Mohs surgeon to remove only the cancer cells and leave the normal skin unharmed. Doing so is imperative to prevent the recurrence of the skin cancer.

What are the advantages of Mohs surgery and what are my chances for cure?

By using detailed mapping techniques and complete microscopic control, 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 benefits are the removal of as little normal skin as possible, and the highest possibility for curing the skin cancer.

Using Mohs surgery, the percentage of cure is more than 99% for most skin cancers, and at times even when other forms of treatment have failed. Other methods of treatment offer approximately a 50% chance of success if previous treatments have failed. Other common treatments for skin cancer (including destroying tissue by scraping, burning or liquid nitrogen, routine excisional surgery, radiation, and/or chemical creams) offer lower cure rates, higher chances of recurrence, and often result in larger wounds.

When will I be able to return to work?

Most patients can return to work the day after surgery. Although we ask that you plan to take it easy for 24-48 hours. We recommend no heavy lifting or strenuous activity for at least 10-14 days following surgery.

What if I have more than one skin cancer?

Usually, we treat only one skin cancer per visit. Each treatment site requires time and special attention particularly with post-operative bandaging. Additionally, most insurance companies limit coverage to a single skin cancer per day. On special occasions we will do our best to accommodate multiple skin cancers in one surgical visit.



What happens the day of surgery?

Your appointment will be scheduled early in the morning. Our staff will escort you into a surgical procedure room where we will discuss the procedure then proceed to numb the area around the skin cancer. Once it is numb, the visible cancer and a layer of tissue will be removed. This tissue is carefully mapped by the surgeon and taken to our laboratory where our histotechnician will immediately process, cut, and stain the tissue, placing sections on microscope slides for evaluation. You will have a temporary bandage placed over the wound during this waiting period.

The surgical procedure alone takes 10-15 minutes. However, it takes a minimum of 30-45mins to prepare and microscopically examine the tissue sections of each layer. Several surgical stages and microscopic examinations may be required, and you will be asked to wait in the exam room or waiting room between stages. Although there is no way to tell before surgery how many stages will be necessary, most skin cancers are removed in one to two stages.

We would like to make the time you spend with us as pleasant and comfortable as possible. You may want to bring reading material, a digital music player with earbuds, a tablet or laptop to occupy your time while waiting for the microscope slides to be processed and examined. Consider wearing loose, old, comfortable clothing. Beverages and snacks will be available upon request. The most difficult part of the procedure is waiting for the results from the laboratory aspect of the procedure. Since we do not know in advance how much time is necessary to remove the skin cancer and repair the wound, we ask that you plan to be in the office most of the day and that you make no other commitments during your day of surgery. Please be sure to inform your companion/driver of this as well.

What complications may occur?

Complications after Mohs surgery are rare but include a chance of bleeding or infection. For any complications or questions following surgery, please review the written instruction sheet we will provide you with the day of surgery.

Will I be hospitalized?

No, Mohs surgery is performed in an outpatient surgical procedure room, and you return home the same day.

Will the surgery leave a scar?

Yes, any surgery will leave a scar. However, we take meticulous care to minimize any scarring. Dr. Arnaud's training emphasized and focused on providing the best aesthetic outcomes possible. Because Mohs surgery removes as little normal tissue as possible, the scar's footprint is minimized. Immediately after the cancer is removed, we may choose in discussion with you:

- (1) to leave the wound to heal itself without stitches (second intention healing)
- (2) to repair the wound in a linear fashion with stitches
- (3) to repair the wound using a skin graft or flap with stitches

This decision is based on the safest method that will provide the best cosmetic and functional result.



Will I have pain after surgery?

Most patients do not complain of significant pain. If there is any discomfort it is minimal, Tylenol or Ibuprofen is all that is usually necessary for relief. We do ask that you plan on taking it easy for 24-48 hours to reduce the risk of post-operative bleeding.

Preparing for Surgery

At time of skin cancer diagnosis:

Please take a photo with your cell phone or personal camera so that the biopsy site can be identified at the time of your surgery.

The Morning of Surgery:

Please bathe/shower and wash your hair. This will minimize the risk of a surgical site infection.

On the day of surgery, we suggest that you eat your normal breakfast, unless otherwise specified.

Transportation:

If you require a mild sedative for the procedure, it is necessary that you arrange to have a companion drive you from our facility. Seating is limited and we ask that you have only one companion.

Medical History:

Please plan to arrive about 10-15 minutes before your scheduled appointment.

Medications:

Continue all medications prescribed by your doctor *including* blood thinners like Coumadin, Xarelto, Plavix, Aspirin. DO NOT take any erectile dysfunction medication 72 hours prior to your appointment.

If you are on Warfarin (brand name: Coumadin), please ensure you have an up-to-date INR 24 hours prior to surgery.

If you are taking medicine or herbal supplements *without* your doctor's orders, please discontinue 10 days prior to your surgery appointment (including Aspirin, Anacin, Bufferin, Excedrin, Alka Seltzer, Oral Vitamin E, Ginkgo Biloba, Fish Oil).

You may take Acetaminophen (Tylenol), Ibuprofen (Advil/Motrin) or Naproxen (Aleve) for pain.

Alcohol will also promote bleeding, so avoid alcohol 48 hours before and after surgery.



Please avoid wearing make-up, perfume, nail polish, and jewelry. If you require oxygen, be sure to bring enough supply to last the entire day. We do not have additional oxygen supplies.

Nursing Home Patients:

Nursing home patients are required to bring a companion with them to help with their needs throughout the day. We are not staffed to help with individual/special care outside of the surgical procedure rooms.

Important Reminders

- Continue to take your prescription medications including blood thinners. If you are on Warfarin (brand name: Coumadin), please ensure you have an up-to-date INR within 24 hours prior to surgery.
- DO NOT take any Erectile Dysfunction medication 72 hours prior to your surgery appointment.
- If you are taking medicine or herbal supplements without your doctor's orders, please discontinue 10 days prior to your surgery appointment
- Bathe and wash your hair and body prior to surgery to minimize the risk of infection.
- Eat a normal breakfast, unless instructed otherwise.
- Dress comfortably.
- Plan to be in our office most of the day, please do not make any other commitments on the day of your surgery.
- Please bring snacks/lunch as the entire process may take most of the day.
- Do not consume any alcohol for 48 hours prior to and after your surgery.

After Surgery

Wound Care:

48 hours of inactivity is recommended after Mohs Surgery. Instructions for wound care will be discussed by staff and provided in written form. Wound care ranges from simply protecting and preserving a bandage applied in the facility to daily changes of the bandage. **You will have a pressure bandage when you leave the day of your procedure that Dr. Arnaud will want you to leave on and keep dry for 48 hours post procedure.** We will discuss wound care following the 48-hour period after your procedure.



Follow up appointments:

If you have sutures that are none dissolving, then you will likely have to follow up in 5-7 days for most suture removals. A return visit sometimes will be requested to examine the healed surgical site or to remove your surgical dressings. Afterwards, you may return to your referring physician for routine check-ups. Regular follow-up with your dermatologist 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 dermatologist at least once a year to examine the treated skin cancer and check for new skin cancers.

Protect yourself:

The best protection from skin cancer is to avoid the harmful ultraviolet radiation of the sun. Even if you tan easily, sun contributes to skin cancer in two ways. First, sunlight damages our skin's DNA and genes that control cell growth and repair, and second, sunlight damages the body's immune system so that early cancers grow unchecked by normal immune defense mechanisms.

Minimize exposure by:

1. Using any sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 and preferably with UVA/UVB protection when you spend any time in the sun. Consider using physical sunscreen containing zinc oxide or titanium dioxide.
2. Avoid sun exposure during mid-day hours (10am to 4pm).
3. It is important to remain protected even on cloudy days since ultraviolet light/radiation from the sun penetrates through the overcast clouds.
4. Wear ultraviolet light/radiation protective clothing and sunglasses in addition to sunscreen. There are many brands that offer UPF apparel.

If you follow this advice, you can still enjoy outdoor activities while significantly decreasing the chance of future skin cancers by lowering the amount of ultraviolet light/radiation you are exposed to.

Thank you for choosing the MMC Dermatology Mohs Surgery Unit for your skin cancer treatment. We look forward to providing you with empathetic, high-quality, and evidence-based care. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Dr. Arnaud & The MMC Mohs Surgery Team.

