

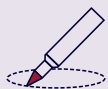
# How Mohs Surgery Is Done

Mohs surgery is a special type of surgery that cuts out layers of skin until all the cancer is gone. It is done by a surgeon who has been specially trained to perform all the steps in the surgery. It is an outpatient procedure done in the Mohs surgeon's office. That means you do not have to stay overnight at a hospital and can go home the same day.

**Read the steps below and talk with your doctor about how Mohs surgery is performed and whether it is the right treatment option for your skin cancer.**



Depending on where the cancer is, you will sit or lie down for the surgery, wearing either your clothes or a hospital gown.



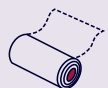
The surgeon looks at the cancer and uses a pen to mark up the area where the skin will be removed.



You will be awake for the surgery but a medicine is used to numb the area being cut out so that you do not feel any pain.



When the skin is numb, the surgeon cuts out the skin cancer and a small area of normal looking skin around it. This may take about 10 to 20 minutes.



After the skin is removed, a pressure dressing (bandage) will be put on the skin to help stop the bleeding. You may be told to sit in the waiting room while the skin that was removed is examined.



The skin is looked at under a microscope in the lab. This can take 40 to 50 minutes.



If skin cancer cells are found on the edge (margin) of the skin, you will go back to the room and have another stage of surgery. You will have as many stages as are needed until no more skin cancer cells are seen under the microscope; this is called "clearing the margins." Most people will need 1 to 3 stages within the same day to remove all the cancer. Your surgeon will not know how deep the cancer is, how much skin will be removed, or how long the surgery takes until the surgery starts.



When the skin is cancer-free, the surgeon will talk about the options for closing the wound and for reconstructive surgery, if needed. You are given care and follow-up instructions and can go home.

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**Visit [Mohs-Facts.org](http://Mohs-Facts.org) to learn more about how Mohs surgery is performed and about the risks and follow-up care needed.**