

Staged Excision (Slow Mohs)

Mohs Surgery Clinic looks at and treats skin cancers and non-cancerous skin growths. There are different kinds of skin cancer. Most skin cancers can be cured if found and treated early. These include:

- Basal cell carcinoma (the most common form of skin cancer),
- Squamous cell carcinoma, and
- Melanoma.

Staged Excision

Staged excision is a way of taking out shallow melanoma skin cancers. This often takes two or more visits.

At each visit, the area of skin cancer is removed and sent to our pathology lab. The lab will look for melanoma cells in this tissue. Results can take from 2 days up to 2 weeks. If there is still melanoma at the edges, this can be re-excised at your next visit. You may have a bandaged wound and many visits over a few days or even weeks to make sure that all the cancer is removed.

The wound will be repaired once all the cancer cells are removed. You may need a plastic surgeon. It depends on the size and location of the wound.

Though this method has many steps, it works best to preserve healthy skin and has the **highest cure rate**. We cannot use the faster methods that we use for other skin cancers to find melanoma in the tissue. Though this process is called “Slow Mohs”, the tissue is given high priority in the lab.

Getting Ready for Surgery

On the day of your surgery, wash the area with antibacterial soap before coming to the clinic. If the procedure is on your face, **do not** wear any make-up. Wear comfortable, layered clothing.

You may eat normal meals, even breakfast. You may bring an iPod or something to listen to music during the surgery. We ask that **all** cell phones and pagers be turned off in the procedure rooms.

Take all routine prescribed medicines, and any prescribed blood thinners. If your referring provider prescribed anti-anxiety medicine to help you relax, bring it with you. Take only after you have talked with the surgeon. **Do not** take them at home. You will need to have a driver if you decide to use these medicines.

If your skin cancer or growth is around your mouth or lips, you may need to take antibiotics before surgery. You may also need to take them if you have had a heart valve replacement, joint replacement, or organ transplant. Please ask your primary doctor about prescriptions before your visit.

Bring a complete list of past and current health problems, surgeries and current medicines with dosage. We need to know of any implanted devices.

Relatives or friends may come with you. They will need to stay in the waiting room. You will need a driver if you have surgery on the face as it may cause swelling that affects vision.

Day of Surgery

When you arrive, check in at the registration desk or a kiosk. In clinic, the staff and the surgeon will discuss your treatment with you. You will be given a local anesthetic to numb the area. The skin cancer will be removed and sent to the lab. The wound may be partially closed with stitches or just bandaged tightly.

After Surgery

You may have pain, fatigue and swelling for a few days which will limit how much you can do. **You will have restrictions** for one to several weeks.

You will return to the Mohs clinic, see a plastic surgeon, or your local provider to have the stitches removed in about 1 to 3 weeks. **You will need routine follow up skin exams.** You may schedule the follow-up visits here or with your primary doctor. **All forms of skin surgery will leave a scar.** Most sites heal very well and may take up to a full year. Our clinical staff will answer any questions or concerns about a scar.

Billing

Check with your insurance in advance to see if you need a referral. This will avoid delays.

UW Health Physician Billing
(608) 833-6090.

UW Health Clinic Billing
(608) 262-2221.

Priceline (for cost estimates)

(608) 263-1507

If you are a patient receiving care at UnityPoint – Meriter, Swedish American or a health system outside of UW Health, please use the phone numbers provided in your discharge instructions for any questions or concerns.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 1/2021 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#7539