

# Mohs Surgery FAQ's

## **Is Mohs surgery the best treatment option for all skin cancers?**

If you have any type of suspicious skin lesion you should seek evaluation by a dermatologist. If skin cancer is suspected, he or she may recommend and perform a biopsy. Mohs surgery may be recommended based on the type and location of the skin cancer, as well as other factors. If your dermatologist does not perform this technique, he or she will be able to refer you to a Mohs surgeon in your area.

Patients attempting to locate a Mohs surgeon on their own may elect to use the Surgeon Locator under Patient Information. Some members may have their own patient information pamphlets that summarize their Mohs training, experience, and practice information.

## **Is Mohs surgery more expensive than other types of skin cancer treatment?**

Because it involves a special multi-step process, Mohs surgery is typically slightly more expensive than other skin cancer treatments. It is important, however, to consider the advantages of the Mohs technique (healthy tissue sparing capabilities, lower recurrence rate, etc.) in examining the total cost. Your physician's billing specialists will be able to provide you with estimated insurance reimbursement rates and/or possible payment plan information.

## **Will Mohs surgery be covered by my insurance plan?**

Mohs surgery is covered by most insurance plans, including Medicare. Please enlist the aid of your employee benefits administrator and/or physician's billing specialist to determine estimated out-of-pocket expenses. The ASMS does not maintain specific insurance plan information for our members, so you will need to inquire directly.

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## **Will Mohs surgery leave a scar?**

All surgical procedures have the potential for some degree of visible scarring. The appearance of a post-Mohs surgical scar will depend on several factors, including size and location of the final defect, individual skin characteristics, and the reconstruction options available. You should keep in mind, however, that the tissue-sparing nature of the Mohs technique may result in a smaller, less noticeable scar than other skin cancer removal methods. The Mohs surgeon also may be able incorporate suture lines into the patient's natural skin lines and folds. Most scars improve in appearance naturally over time, and future scar revision techniques may be employed if necessary.

## **My skin cancer is in a very noticeable facial area and I am concerned about my appearance following Mohs surgery. Should I have the skin cancer removal performed by a plastic surgeon?**

We would recommend removal of the skin cancer by a dermatologist with specialized training in Mohs surgery, due to the histopathology component of the procedure. You may wish to discuss with the Mohs surgeon the option of having a plastic surgeon perform the closure following Mohs surgery, if this is your preference. Your Mohs surgeon's office would be able to help coordinate this type of shared treatment approach.

## **How can I locate a board certified Mohs surgeon?**

It is important to note that there is no formal board certification process specific to Mohs surgery, as the procedure represents just one technique utilized by dermatologists in the treatment of skin cancer. ASMS Fellow and Affiliate members must be Board certified in dermatology by the American Board of Dermatology or the American Osteopathic Board of Dermatology. The surgical, histopathologic interpretation and

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reconstruction components of Mohs surgery are routinely taught to dermatologists in their Residency training. In addition, dermatologists are examined in these areas by their respective Boards.

## **There is another organization of Mohs surgeons, the American College of Mohs Surgery. What is the difference between the two societies?**

Both organizations are professional medical societies comprised of practicing Mohs surgeons. Each Society encourages high-quality continuing medical education and quality assurance measures for its members. Both organizations offer membership to Mohs technicians who provide technical support to their member physicians.

The ACMS sponsors its own post-residency fellowship training in Mohs surgery, while the majority of ASMS members received their Mohs training in dermatology Residency or post-Residency training courses and preceptorships. Some ASMS members also have completed ACMS Mohs fellowships. With our strong organizational emphasis on education, the ASMS encourages physicians to seek all forms of training that will enhance their proficiency in Mohs surgery and other dermatologic procedures. ACMS fellowship training is one option which may or may not be necessary, based on the Mohs surgeon's Residency training and/or other non-fellowship training experiences.

From the American Society for Mohs Surgery