

## *Surgery Recovery Guide*

*This guide will help you prepare for Mohs surgery and care for your wound afterward. Following these instructions carefully will help ensure optimal healing and the best cosmetic outcome.*

### **1. BEFORE YOUR PROCEDURE**

#### Preparing for Your Visit

- *Eat a normal breakfast or lunch on the day of your procedure unless otherwise instructed.*

#### Medications and Supplements

- *Take your regular prescribed medications (including blood thinners) unless we specifically tell you to stop them.*
- *Avoid alcohol, aspirin, or non-prescribed supplements for 24 hours before your procedure unless medically necessary.*

#### What to Wear

- *Loose, comfortable clothing that allows access to the treatment site.*
- *A shirt that buttons or zips if your procedure is on your head or neck.*

#### What to Bring

- *A list of your medications and allergies.*
- *Any paperwork or insurance cards requested by our staff.*
- *Something to pass the time (book, tablet, or headphones).*

#### Transportation and Support

- *Most patients can drive themselves home after Mohs surgery, but if your procedure involves the eye, ear, or extensive repair, arrange for a driver.*
- *Plan to spend several hours in our office — Mohs surgery is performed in stages, and we take the time to ensure every cancer cell is removed before reconstruction begins.*

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### **2. DAY OF YOUR PROCEDURE**

#### Check-In and Paperwork

- *You'll be greeted by our staff and guided through any remaining consent or insurance forms.*
- *We'll review your medications, allergies, and procedure details one final time.*

### Local Anesthesia & Comfort Measures

- *All Mohs and surgical procedures are performed under local anesthesia. You'll be awake but comfortable, and we'll monitor you throughout the process.*

### Waiting Between Stages

- *Mohs surgery is performed in stages. Each layer of tissue is removed, carefully mapped, and examined under the microscope by your surgeon until the margins are clear.*
- *Between stages, you can relax in a private waiting area while slides are processed.*

### Wound Repair & Bandaging

- *Once the cancer has been completely removed, your surgeon will discuss the best reconstruction for both function and appearance — such as a flap, skin graft, or layered closure.*
  - *A sterile dressing will be applied, and written wound-care instructions will be provided before you leave.*
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## 3. AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE

### Immediate Care

- *Keep your initial dressing clean, dry, and intact for the first 24 hours (or as instructed).*
  - *A small amount of oozing or spotting on the bandage is normal.*
  - *If bleeding occurs, apply firm pressure with clean gauze for **20 minutes without checking**.*
- Most bleeding stops with steady pressure. If bleeding continues, repeat this 20 minute process 2 more times. If there is still bleeding, contact our office at the number below.*

### Swelling & Discomfort

- *Mild swelling, bruising, or tightness are expected and usually peak within 48 hours.*
- *Apply an ice pack wrapped in a soft cloth for 10–15 minutes every hour while awake on the first day.*

### Activity

- *Rest the day of your procedure.*
- *Avoid bending, heavy lifting, or strenuous activity for at least 48 hours to minimize bleeding.*
- *Sleep with your head elevated for surgeries on the face, nose, or ears.*

### Pain Control

- *Most patients do well with acetaminophen (Tylenol) alone. Avoid ibuprofen or aspirin unless directed, as they may increase bleeding.*
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## 4. WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS

### General Care (All Wound Types)

- *Wash your hands thoroughly before touching the area.*

- *Remove the outer bandage after 24 hours (unless we instruct otherwise).*
- *Clean gently with mild soap and water. Hydrogen peroxide may be used only if crusting develops.*
- *Pat dry — do not rub.*
- *Apply a thin layer of petroleum jelly (Vaseline) or antibiotic ointment.*
- *Cover with a non-stick dressing (Telfa pad) and secure with paper tape or a small bandage.*
- *Change the dressing once daily or more often if it becomes wet or soiled.*

#### Sutured Wounds

- *Keep sutures covered and moist with ointment.*
- *Sutures are typically removed in 5–14 days depending on location.*
- *Do not apply makeup, sunscreen, or creams until sutures are removed.*

#### Skin Graft Sites

- *Grafts may appear pale or slightly gray initially — this is normal.*
- *Keep the pressure dressing in place until your follow-up visit unless instructed otherwise.*
- *Once approved to change the dressing, follow the general wound-care routine above.*
- *Avoid trauma or stretching to the graft area for 2 weeks.*

#### Flap Repairs

- *Flap sites may look bruised or swollen for several days.*
- *Avoid pressure or sleeping directly on the area.*
- *Clean gently along suture lines with a cotton swab and reapply ointment daily.*

#### Natural Healing (Secondary Intention)

- *These wounds heal gradually from the base upward.*
- *Keep the wound moist with petroleum jelly at all times; never allow it to dry or crust.*
- *Expect gradual contraction and color change over several weeks.*

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## 5. HEALING TIMELINE

### Days 1–2

*Mild bleeding or drainage, controlled with pressure. Swelling begins.*

### Days 3–5

*Peak swelling and bruising. Some tightness or throbbing is normal.*

### Days 7–10

*Sutures may be removed; redness present but healing well.*

Weeks 2–4

*Early scar formation; firmness decreases gradually.*

Months 3–6

*Redness fades; scar softens and blends with surrounding skin.*

Months 6–12

*Final scar maturation; area continues to remodel.*

*Protect the scar from sun exposure for at least 3 months.*

*Use sunscreen SPF 30+ or keep the area covered.*

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## **6. WHEN TO CALL OUR OFFICE**

**Call our office immediately if you experience:**

- **Increasing redness spreading beyond the wound**
- **Pus-like drainage**
- **Fever or chills**
- **Severe or worsening pain**
- **Bleeding that does not stop after 20 minutes of firm pressure**