

Reconstruction

After Mohs Surgery

This material will help you understand reconstruction after Mohs surgery and help you prepare for surgery.

What is Mohs surgery?

Mohs surgery is a special technique to remove skin cancer. The goal of the surgery is to remove all of the cancerous tissue while saving as much of the normal skin as possible. The surgery is most commonly used for basal cell carcinoma or squamous carcinoma.

Why is reconstruction needed after Mohs surgery?

It is difficult to exactly predict how large the skin cancer is before Mohs surgery. Sometimes the doctor must remove a lot of tissue for the surgery to be successful. As a result, the surgery can create a large defect in the skin. Reconstruction is used in these cases to cover the surgical wound and prevent the formation of disfiguring scars.

What does reconstruction involve?

There are several different ways that doctors can reconstruct after Mohs surgery. The technique that your doctor will use depends on the size of the area that was removed and its location. In some cases, the skin can be stretched over the wound and stitched together.

If tissue was removed from an area where the skin does not stretch, the doctor may do a skin graft. This involves taking skin from another area of your body. This could be from behind or in front of your ears, or over the collarbone. The

skin will then be sewn into place over the wound. The area where the skin was removed will also be closed with stitches.

What should I expect on the day of reconstruction?

In most cases, reconstruction is performed on the same day as Mohs surgery. It is typically an outpatient procedure. Before reconstruction, you will be given anesthesia (usually local and some sedation) to help keep you comfortable during the procedure. Reconstruction may take less than one hour for smaller defects, but repairing larger defects may take more time.

What should I expect after reconstruction?

Some pain and discomfort is normal after the procedure and can be controlled by over-the-counter pain medications. The pain should improve significantly within one week of the surgery. The appearance of any scars should naturally improve over time, but it may take up to one year for your scar to fully mature. If significant scarring develops, your doctor may inject some anti-scarring medication to try to dissolve the scar tissue.

What are the risks and possible complications?

There are some risks after Mohs surgery and reconstruction. They include:

- Temporary or permanent numbness around the surgical area
- Scarring
- Pain
- Infection
- Loss of grafted skin

In some cases, additional surgery is needed to repair the wound.

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