



“Do I need a Mohs Surgeon?”

The question to ask if a skin cancer is detected.

With the advent of the “sun season,” the public is urged to contact their doctor or dermatologist to schedule a skin cancer screening. By heightening awareness of skin cancer as Americans spend more time outdoors under the summer sun and vacationing at the beach, the American College of Mohs Surgery wants to alert people of the dangers associated with skin cancer.

“Skin cancer is the most common and rapidly increasing form of cancer. More than 3.5 million Americans will be diagnosed with the disease this year alone,” said Dr. Dafnis Carranza, M.D., a fellowship-trained Mohs surgeon and member of the American College of Mohs Surgery. “If skin cancer is detected, patients should know that it is not necessarily life threatening or disfiguring. Effective skin cancer treatments are available, and in complex or advanced cases, Mohs Micrographic Surgery (a precise procedure that provides up to a 99 percent cure rate for certain types of skin cancer) is the treatment of choice.

Mohs Micrographic Surgery is a state-of-the-art skin cancer treatment that relies on the precision and accuracy of a microscope and immediate pathological examination of the tissue sample to trace out and ensure the removal of skin cancer—down to its roots. This technique ensures that all diseased tissue is removed, leaving healthy skin intact so that the Mohs surgeon, who is also trained in reconstructive surgery (repairing the wound), will be able to better repair the incision and minimize scarring.

An additional benefit of Mohs surgery is cost-effectiveness. “In the current health care environment, we



need to not only find medically effective treatments, but cost effective ones as well,” said Dr. Carranza, whose practice is located in Humboldt Tennessee. “Mohs surgery fits this bill because the skin cancer recurs so rarely after treatment.”

A study published in the Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology showed that Mohs surgery is one of the most cost-effective skin cancer treatments available because of the low recurrence rate of tumors treated via the Mohs procedure. While most skin cancer treatments have a recurrence rate of 10 percent, certain tumors treated with Mohs surgery return only one percent of the time.



“The highest cure and low recurrence rates equal fewer surgeries for Mohs patients,” said John Zitelli, M.D., co-author of the study and a former president of the Mohs College. “Mohs patients also require fewer follow-up examinations than those treated with other methods.”

Because Mohs surgery minimizes scarring, the procedure is particularly advantageous when the cancer is located in a cosmetically sensitive area of the body, or a location where it is important to preserve healthy tissue for maximum function such as eyelids, nose, ears, lips, scalp, fingers, toes or genitals.

“If a patient is told by a family physician or dermatologist that he or she has skin cancer on the head, face, or neck, the patient’s first question should be “Do I need a Mohs surgeon?” said Dr. Carranza. “The combination of minimally invasive surgery, highest cure rate, and cost effectiveness make Mohs surgery by a fellowship-trained Mohs surgeon the best option for many patients.”

Mohs micrographic surgery is most commonly used for basal and squamous cell carcinomas. It should be the treatment of choice when:

- The cancer is large;
- The edges of the cancer cannot be clearly defined;
- The cancer is in an area of the body where it is important to preserve healthy tissue for the maximum functional and cosmetic result (eyelid, nose, ears, lips, scalp, fingers, toes or genitals);
- The cancer is likely to recur if treated by other methods;
- Prior treatment has failed.

For more information or a pamphlet on Mohs surgery, contact Dr. Dafnis Carranza Dermatology and Skin Cancer Consultants • 701 Medical Park Drive • Humboldt, TN

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Protect yourself from the sun

Sun exposure is the most preventable risk factor for skin cancer, including melanoma. You can have fun in the sun and decrease your risk of skin cancer. Here’s how to be sun smart:

- **Generously apply a broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen** with an SPF of at least 30 to all exposed skin. Reapply every two hours, even on cloudy days, and after swimming or sweating.

- **Wear protective clothing**, such as a long-sleeved shirt, pants, and a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses, where possible.
- **Seek shade** when appropriate. Remembering that the sun's rays are strongest between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If your shadow appears to be shorter than you are, seek shade.
- **Use extra caution near water, snow and sand** because they reflect and intensify the damaging rays of the sun, which can increase your chance of sunburn.
- **Get vitamin D safely** through a healthy diet that may include vitamin supplements. Don't seek the sun.
- **Avoid tanning beds.** Ultraviolet light from the sun and tanning beds can cause skin cancer and wrinkling. If you want to look tan, consider using a self-tanning product, but continue to use sunscreen with it.
- **Check your birthday suit on your birthday.** If you notice anything changing, growing or bleeding on your skin, see a board certified dermatologist. Skin cancer is very treatable when caught early.

For more information visit: www.aad.org • www.mohscollege.org • www.skincancer.org

