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Mohs microscopic surgery is a half-day surgical procedure performed in our office. The site to be treated will be injected with a local anesthetic. The doctor will then remove a level of tissue from the affected area which will be examined in our in-office laboratory. If the tissue shows no residual cancer cells, the doctor will close the wound with sutures (or possibly discuss other options for healing) and you will be free to return home. However, if the specimen indicated the presence of cancer cells, an addition level of tissue will be taken and again analyzed. These steps are repeated until all the cancer cells are completely removed.

Each level of tissue is analyzed in our laboratory while you wait. This requires approximately 30 to 45 minutes per level. During this time, you will be comfortably seated in the suite 707 waiting room, so bring a good book or something to keep you occupied while you are waiting. Refreshments will be provided.

Because you will be injected with a local anesthetic only, there are no dietary restrictions. We suggest that you have a light breakfast and take your usual medications, except for medications that may thin the blood (see next paragraph). Most patients can drive themselves home after the surgery. If the skin cancer is near the eye, please arrange for someone to drive you.

If you are taking any prescribed medications which may thin the blood (including aspirin, coumadin or warfarin), please call our office to talk to your dermatology doctor to discuss the possibility of discontinuing the blood-thinning medication. **DO NOT STOP YOUR MEDICATION WITHOUT YOUR DOCTOR'S PERMISSION.**

If you take aspirin or Advil (ibuprofen) for aches and pains, please stop taking these for ten days prior to your surgery. You may, however, take Tylenol (acetaminophen) at any time. You will be able to restart aspirin or Advil 48 hours after your procedure.

You should plan to be in town for at least one week following your surgical procedure; sutures are usually removed one week after surgery on the face/head and two weeks for surgery on other parts of the body. You will be required to return to our office for surgical post-operative visits and suture removal.

You may discuss any additional questions regarding your surgery or any other issue concerning your treatment with your doctor.

WOUND CARE INSTRUCTIONS AFTER MOHS SURGERY

Keep the pressure bandage on and dry for at least 24 hours. Take it easy for the rest of the day and minimize your activity.

A small amount of bleeding through the bandage is okay. If the blood spot is growing larger, sit down in a comfortable location and hold pressure with your hand for 20 minutes without letting go. If the bleeding persists, please call our office. If you have discomfort, take Tylenol or acetaminophen. Do not take Advil, ibuprofen or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory agents for 48 hours. Do not drink alcohol for 24 hours. Avoid vigorous physical activity or lifting heavy objects for at least 48 hours or as instructed otherwise.

After 24 to 48 hours, wash your hands and remove the dressing completely. Cleanse the wound gently with soap and water. Next, apply Vaseline or Aquaphor ointment with a cotton swab or clean finger. Use enough to cover the wound with about 1/8th inch thickness of ointment, and then cover it with a bandage. Keeping the wound clean, moist with ointment, free of scabs and covered with a bandage will aid in the healing process. Your wound does not need to “air out”. This will lead to scabbing, which slows the healing process and may cause more of a scar.

Continue to clean the wound once or twice daily until the stitches are removed. On the morning of your return visit (to have stitches removed), clean the wound but do not put any ointment on it. If you have an open wound, continue this wound care routine until you are told to stop.

We recommend against exposing the wound to water from a swimming pool, Jacuzzi, or ocean until the stitches have been removed or until the open wound has closed completely.

Signs of infection include a spreading area of redness and puffiness around the wound, yellowish discharge (pus), and increasing pain. It is normal to have a soft, off-white or creamy light yellow discharge on wounds that have not been stitched.

Do not pull, stretch, or exert pressure on your wound. If you feel stretching or tightness with a particular movement or activity, please stop that activity, as the stitches may break.

Stitches in the beard area should not be shaved over, let the hair grow until the sutures are removed.

If you have received a prescription for antibiotic pills, please take them as directed.

You may reach Dr. Bukaty any time by calling the office at (949)644-8556.

Herbal supplements that can increase bleeding during and after procedures:

Discontinue those that cause irreversible effects on platelets 7-10 days prior to procedure.

Garlic

Gingko Bilboa (several days prior)

Ginseng

Ginger

Glucosamine

Vitamin E (several days prior)

Alcohol (discontinue 5 days before and until two days after the procedure)