

Carolina Skin Surgery Center Monthly Newsletter

January

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Edition 23

Do I really need to have Mohs Surgery if I cannot see anything?

By: April LeClear

John Doe (not a real patient) was seen by his dermatologist (a medical practitioner trained to diagnose and treat skin cancer) who found a suspicious spot on his left cheek. The dermatologist was concerned that this lesion was skin cancer so a biopsy (a sample of tissue taken from the body in order to examine it more closely) was performed. A Pathologist evaluated the tissue using a microscope and informed Mr. Doe's dermatologist that it was a skin cancer. Mr. Doe's dermatologist then informed him of the diagnosis and referred him to a Mohs surgeon to ensure complete removal of the skin cancer with the best cosmetic results. Mr. Doe is scheduled for Mohs Micrographic Surgery in the next few weeks. (For more information about Mohs surgery, please visit our website.)

A couple of weeks pass and Mr. Doe notices that the area appears to have healed. He cannot see anything there so he thinks that **maybe the cancer is gone** and he will not need to have Mohs surgery anymore. He calls the surgery office and asks to speak with the Surgery Coordinator to ask, *"If I do not see anything after my biopsy, do I need to have surgery?"*

Every once in a while, we will hear this question. If you are not a Physician or if you have never been through this before then it is a valid question. Part of our job as your healthcare team is to provide you with knowledge and answers to these types of questions.

The answer to this question would be "Yes". **You still need to have the lesion treated.** A biopsy typically removes the surface of the lesion leaving tumor cells that remain in the skin. These "roots" are not visible with the naked eye. If they are not removed, they may continue to grow. The cancer will likely reappear and could require more extensive surgery. If the cancer remains untreated for a long period of time, it can spread deeply into the skin and invade other organs. How quickly the cancer spreads depends on the type that you have. (For more information on the different types of skin cancer, please visit our website at carolinaskinsurgery.com) The best way to ensure that the lesion is gone is to follow the treatment plan of your dermatologist. If they are recommending Mohs Micrographic Surgery, it is because of the following reasons:

1. The cancer is in a difficult area where it is important to preserve healthy tissue for maximum functional and cosmetic result such as eyelids, nose, ears, lips, fingers, toes and genitals.
2. Cancers which are large in size (usually greater than 2 cm on the body or extremities and 1 cm on the face.)

3. The edges of the cancer cannot be clearly defined with the naked eye.
4. The cancer grows rapidly or uncontrollably.
5. The cancer exhibits aggressive pathology (related to its appearance under the microscope.)
6. The cancer was treated previously by another method and recurred.
7. Cancers arising in immunosuppressed patients (such as those with a history of organ transplants.)
8. Scar tissue exists in the area of the cancer.

For more information, please visit: carolinaskinsurgery.com and mohscollege.org

Announcements for January:

- January 1st – the office is closed.
 - If you have an emergency, you can still reach the Provider on call. Just dial the main number (704-295-0000), press 1, and follow the prompts. A Provider will call you back.

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- [Facebook.com/pages/Carolina-Skin-Surgery-Center](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Carolina-Skin-Surgery-Center)

Check out our Blog

- Carolinaskinsurgery.com/blog
- Tell us what you would like to read or learn more about relative to our scope of practice and we will try our best to make it happen.

CAROLINA SKIN SURGERY CENTER

"Specializing in the treatment of skin cancer"

About Dr. Carruth:

Dr. Marc R. Carruth is the Director of Carolina Skin Surgery Center. Dr. Carruth received his M.D. degree from Duke University where he graduated with highest honors in 1993 and was inducted into the Alpha Omega Alpha Medical Honor Society. He was awarded a Howard Hughes Medical Institute fellowship at the National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Carruth completed his internship in Internal Medicine at Harvard, Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts and a Dermatology residency at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia where he was chief resident. Dr. Carruth completed his Mohs Micrographic and Dermatologic Surgery fellowship at Baptist Hospital in Kansas City, MO.

Dr. Carruth is known for his personable bedside manner and has been providing excellent care to patients in the Charlotte region since 1997. He has performed thousands of Mohs micrographic procedures during his tenure.

About Lisa Matuga, PA-C:

Lisa is a Certified Physician Assistant and has been providing excellent dermatologic care in the Charlotte area for over five years.

Lisa received her Master of Science in Medicine and graduated from the Physician Assistant Program at Western Michigan University in 2008. She has a passion for helping patients with their dermatological needs. She has been a part of the CSSC team since September of 2013.

Meet the Staff:

Administrative Assistant: **Sandy** - She always has a smile on her face and is willing to help with anything. Sandy has been a part of the team since April of 2010.

Billing Specialist: **Cathy** – Understanding health insurance can be overwhelming, but Cathy is always willing to call and verify benefits and then explain them to you as simply as possible. Cathy has been a part of the team since December of 2008.

Surgery Coordinator / Certified Clinical Medical Assistant: **Ashley** – She assists Dr. Carruth and Lisa Matuga, PA-C with procedures and also handles the surgery scheduling. If you have had Mohs surgery then you have probably spoken with her! Ashley has been a part of the team since May of 2011.

Registered Medical Assistant / Lab Technician: **Jackie** – She assists Dr. Carruth and Lisa with procedures and also helps process the tissue in the lab. Jackie has been a part of the team since October of 2008.

Certified Surgical Technician: **Cynthia** – She assists Dr. Carruth and Lisa with procedures and has been a part of the team since September of 2009.

Certified Clinical Medical Assistant / Surgery Coordinator: **Chiffon** – She assists Lisa Matuga, PA-C with patients and handles surgery scheduling. She has been a part of the team since August of 2014.

Certified Clinical Medical Assistant / Lab Technician: **Lynn** – She assists Dr. Carruth and Lisa with procedures and also helps process the tissue in the lab. Lynn has been a part of the team since July of 2015.

Office Manager / Certified Medical Practice Executive/ Certified Professional Coder / Certified Physician Practice Manager: **April** has been a part of the team since August of 2006. Please let her know if you have any suggestions or comments – we encourage feedback and are always willing to learn and improve.

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