

Carolina Skin Surgery Center Monthly Newsletter

September

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[Is Mohs Micrographic Surgery Always Necessary?](#)

By: Sandy

Mohs (rhymes with toes) Micrographic Surgery is an advanced treatment procedure for skin cancer which offers the highest potential for recovery – even if the skin cancer has been previously treated. This procedure is a state-of-the-art skin cancer treatment in which the physician serves as surgeon, pathologist, and reconstructive surgeon. The cure rate for Mohs Surgery is as high as 99% for basal cell skin cancer and 95% for squamous cell and recurrent cancers. This procedure, the most exact and precise method of tumor removal, minimizes the chance of regrowth and reduces the amount of scarring or disfigurement.

Is Mohs surgery always necessary? Below is a list of reasons that Mohs surgery would be necessary.

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.

Mohs micrographic surgery is used primarily to treat *basal and squamous cell carcinomas*, but can also be used to treat less common tumors. If a squamous cell carcinoma or basal cell carcinoma do not meet the above criteria then it is most likely you will be scheduled for an excision. Mohs surgery is not typically used to treat melanoma.

Malignant melanoma is typically removed with a wide excision. This involves removing extra skin beyond what can be seen with the eye as melanoma cells can extend well beyond what is visible. The depth reported on the biopsy specimen is important in determining how wide the margins should be

when treating the cancer. While there are some centers that remove melanoma with Mohs Micrographic surgery, most do not because it is more difficult to see the abnormal cells on frozen sections used with the Mohs process than with standard processing.

Squamous cell carcinomas and basal cell carcinomas that are being removed with a standard excision take roughly 45 minutes (depending on location, size, cancer type, etc.). The abnormal tissue is removed and the wound is closed with stitches. The extracted tissue is sent to an off-site lab for testing. A pathologist will examine the tissue to make sure that all cancer cells have been removed. The lab will send a pathology report to our office with the results. One of our Medical Assistants will call you to discuss the results.

For more information, please visit our website at carolinaskinsurgery.com or call the office at 704-295-0000.

Announcements for September:

- September 3rd is Lisa's 2 year anniversary with CSSC!
- Monday, September 7th – the office is closed for Labor Day! Call the main number and follow the prompts if you have an emergency. #704-295-0000
- September 28th is Cynthia's 6 year anniversary with CSSC!

Like us on Facebook

- [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.

Trivia questions (Hint: Answers are hidden in previous newsletters/blogs. Go to carolinaskinsurgery.com/blog for the answers)

- 1) On April 28th, we posted a blog called "The Skinny on Mohs Micrographic Surgery."
 - a. How many Americans will be diagnosed with skin cancer this year?
- 2) On February 23rd, we posted a blog called "We Care". It is an acronym created by Jackie, one of our Registered Medical Assistants.
 - a. Fill in the blank: Welcoming, Energetic, Compassionate, Accurate, Reliable, E_____.
- 3) On May 14th, we posted a blog taken from the Skin Cancer Foundation.
 - a. True or False: Those who begin tanning before the age of 35 increase their risk of developing melanoma by almost 75%.

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 has been a Physician Assistant for over 6 years and has been providing excellent dermatologic care in the Charlotte area for over four 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 and we are very proud to have her as a part of our team.

Meet the Staff:

Receptionist: **Sandy** - She always has a smile on her face and is willing to help with anything. Sandy has been with Dr. Carruth since April of 2010.

Billing: **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 with Dr. Carruth 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 with Dr. Carruth 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 with Dr. Carruth since October of 2008.

Certified Surgical Technician: **Cynthia** – She assists Dr. Carruth and Lisa with procedures and has been with Dr. Carruth 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 our 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 joined our team in July of 2015.

Office Manager: **April** has been with Dr. Carruth since August of 2006. Please let her know if you have any suggestions or comments – we encourage feedback and are always willing to learn.

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