

Toledo Clinic Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery

David J. Kouba, MD, PhD

Diplomate, American Board of Dermatology
Associate, American College of Mohs Micrographic Surgery
Fellow, American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery

Mohs surgery – *behind the scenes*

What is Mohs surgery?

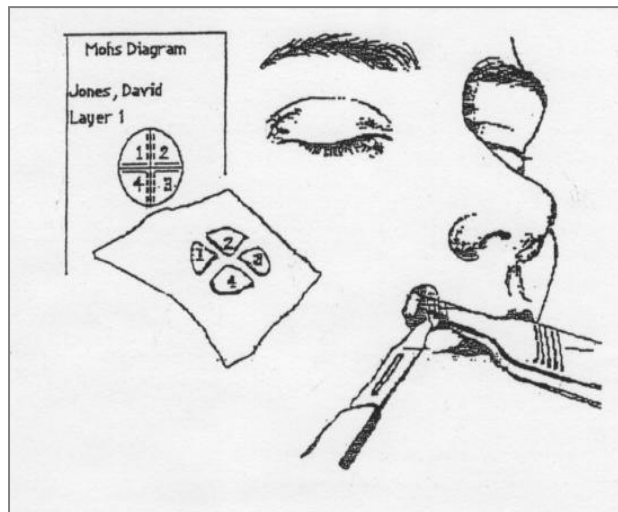
Mohs micrographic surgery is a method by which skin cancer is removed with the aid of a microscope. Because this method spares the most normal tissue while also achieving the highest cure rates of any removal method, it is the gold standard, or treatment of choice, to treat cancers of the skin.

On **most** occasions, the surgery can be accomplished in one appointment, all performed in our specialized outpatient surgery clinic using the following steps.

Phase I : The surgical room dissection

After filling out some background forms, and answering all of your questions, Dr. Kouba will mark with an ink pen all of the visible boundaries of the skin cancer. Next, a local anesthetic will be administered to numb or “freeze” the area.

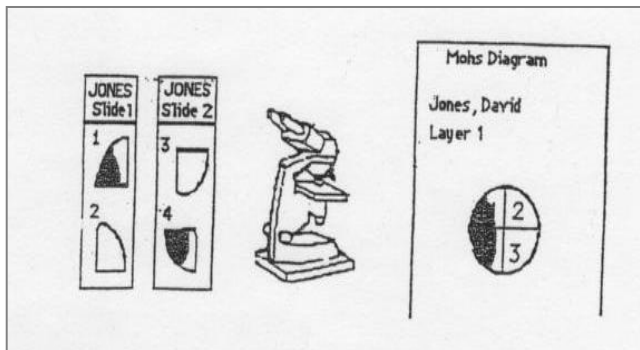
After the numbing, Dr. Kouba will use a scalpel to remove the visible portions of the cancer in one layer. Next, Dr. Kouba will divide your specimen into pieces and he will ink the edges with special dyes for orientation. A drawing is made on your chart showing what the layer looked like and how it was divided and marked. This is our “map” and what we use for precise orientation. The diagram will exactly match the specimen that arrives in the lab.



Phase II: The laboratory freezing and cutting process

Immediately after the drawing is made, the tissue is taken to the laboratory so each piece of tissue can be prepared for viewing under the microscope. The tissue is prepared in such a way that when looking at it under the microscope, Dr. Kouba can see the normal tissue and any cancer that may be present.

Dr. Kouba can tell in what direction the cancer is spreading. It is also possible that the first layer of tissue may be free of tumor.



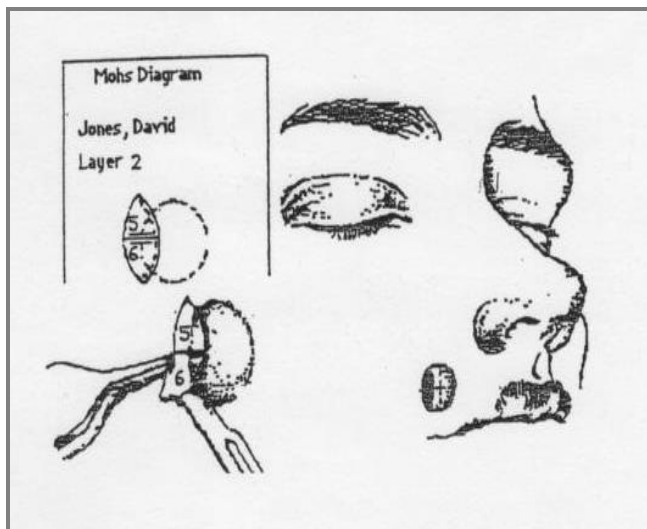
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Phase III: Repeating the process until the cancer is gone

If any cancer is seen, the site of the tumor is located relative to the marked edges viewed under the microscope. Then the location of the tumor is drawn in on the diagram. Dr. Kouba uses the diagram to guide him in the removal of the next layer. This is done on the same day.



Phase IV: The repair.

After the cancer has been removed, Dr. Kouba will first plan out, and then reconstruct the wound. This is when Dr. Kouba uses his training as a cosmetic surgeon to give you the best aesthetic result possible!

In most cases, Dr. Kouba will do the repairs on the very same day. However in some of the more advanced cases, Dr. Kouba will use the facilities in the outpatient surgery center operating room. This is located on the first floor of the Toledo clinic. If you need reconstruction in the OR, then you will receive a bandage to go home with and arrangements will be made for your repair.