

## Procedures - Skin Cancer Removal Info

Skin cancer is diagnosed by removing all or part of the growth and examining its cells under a microscope. It can be treated by a number of methods, depending on the type of cancer, its stage of growth, and its location on your body.

Most skin cancers are removed surgically, by a plastic surgeon or a dermatologist. If the cancer is small, the procedure can be done quickly and easily, in an outpatient facility or the physician's office, using local anesthesia. The procedure may be a simple excision, which usually leaves a thin, barely visible scar. Or curettage and desiccation may be performed. In this procedure the cancer is scraped out with an electric current to control bleeding and kill any remaining cancer cells. This leaves a slightly larger, white scar. In either case, the risks of the surgery are low.

If the cancer is large, however, or if it has spread to the lymph glands or elsewhere in the body, major surgery may be required. Other possible treatments for skin cancer include cryosurgery (freezing the cancer cells), radiation therapy (using x-rays), topical chemotherapy (anti-cancer drugs applied to the skin), and Mohs surgery, a special procedure in which the cancer is shaved off one layer at a time.