

Expectations for Surgery:

Before surgery

Medications: Do NOT discontinue any blood thinning medications, but let us know if you are taking any. These can include: Aspirin, Coumadin (warfarin), Plavix, Xarelto, Eliquis. If you take Warfarin, we will need an INR level drawn within 1 week of surgery. DO stop any blood thinning supplements (i.e. Fish Oil, Vitamin E, Ginseng).

Medical history: Please inform us if you have a pacemaker, defibrillator, AICD (automatic implanted cardioverter-defibrillator), and if you take antibiotics before dental procedures.

Personal hygiene: Plan on keeping bandages clean and dry for 48 hours after your surgery, so we recommend bathing and washing your hair before you come in.

Day of surgery

Your Day: Be prepared to spend the day with us. Bring something to pass time. Wear comfortable clothes. Bring snacks or be prepared to get food nearby. You can eat and drink before your surgery, unless you are otherwise notified but we do not recommend drinking alcohol the night before surgery as this will increase your risk of bleeding.

Smoking: We recommend you minimize smoking 1-2 weeks prior to surgery. This will significantly affect your healing.

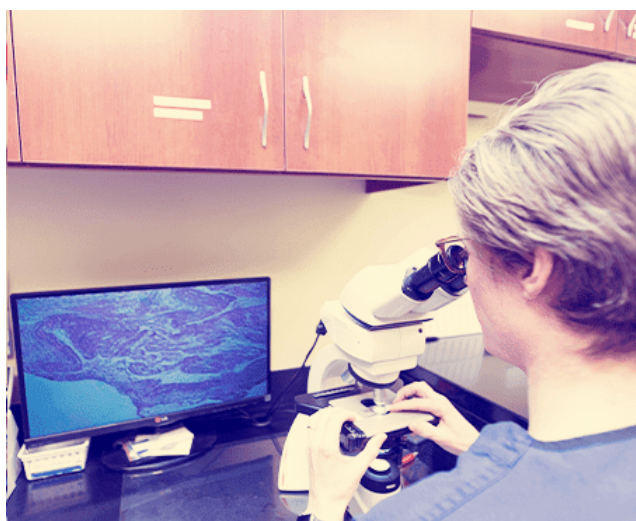
Medications: You should take all of your usual medications the day of surgery unless specifically instructed otherwise.

After surgery

Closure: Once Dr. Gillen no longer sees any skin cancer under the microscope, he will discuss the options to close the surgical wound. Occasionally, other physicians are involved (such as a plastic or oculoplastic surgeon, or an ear, nose, and throat physician).

Recovery: Bruising and swelling is normal. You will have written instructions for wound care. They are also available on our website.

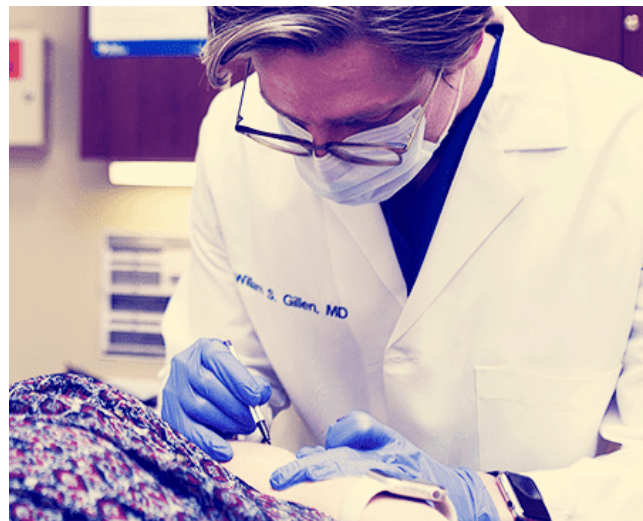
Activities: Avoid strenuous exercise or heavy lifting for 2 weeks after your surgery. We recommend continuing to avoid smoking for 2 weeks and alcohol for 48 hours after surgery. You may have stitches that require an in-office follow up for removal.



The Importance of Treating Skin Cancer

All skin cancers can grow to affect adjacent tissues and structures, which will become destroyed over time. They also frequently become symptomatic, causing pain, itching or bleeding. Certain types of skin cancer can metastasize, or move to other parts of the body such as the lymph nodes, lungs or brain.

It is important to remove skin cancers as early as possible to ensure that a minimal amount of tissue may be removed to cure the cancer and to avoid additional complications.



Frequently Asked Questions:

Will I have a scar? Will I have bruising?

Any time layers of skin are removed, there will be a scar. However, Dr. Gillen's training in reconstructive techniques is extensive and will ensure the scar is as cosmetically pleasing as possible. All scars improve with time and do best with sun protection.

Will I have pain?

Depending on the reconstruction Dr. Gillen needs to perform, there can be discomfort. This can be tended to with lifestyle changes to lessen swelling (like sleeping with extra pillows) and pain medications.

Do I need a driver?

It is not always necessary, but recommended for comfort, especially if your surgery is near your eye.

Can I exercise afterwards? Or drink?

We recommend limiting activities that increase blood pressure. Please limit exercise for 2 weeks and avoid alcohol for the first 48 hours after surgery. Also, please avoid tobacco use for 1-2 weeks before AND after surgery to ensure optimal healing.

Will I be able to return to work after my surgery?

It is unlikely that you will be comfortable returning to work after your surgery. You should plan to spend the day with us.

Why do I need Mohs if my biopsy removed the visible skin cancer?

While it may appear that your skin cancer has been completely removed, there are likely still traces left behind. Mohs surgery is necessary to ensure the cancer does not recur and have long term consequences.

Will I need to come back?

Please plan to follow up for suture removal and evaluation- the timing and extent of this follow up depends on the reconstruction needed. Please visit our website for more information! Wound care sheets are available to view and/or download in the patient education tab.