

DERMOHPLAST

Preparing for your skin cancer surgery

Mohs micrographic surgery is proven to have the highest cure rates for skin cancer. It removes the skin cancer without sacrificing normal skin. Plastic surgery minimises scarring and deformity by using a vast array of sophisticated reconstructive techniques. With Dermohplast you will have the benefits of both.

Our aim is to make your experience as streamlined and as simple as it can possibly be. We want you to put this skin cancer behind you, and get on with the least disruption to your life and your skin.

Meet your Specialists

You should have had a consultation with Dr Ilias Kotronakis, your plastic surgeon, so you can discuss your medical history and current circumstances. A surgical plan will have been developed, and he will have discussed the likely types of reconstruction that you may require. You should leave that consultation with a reasonable understanding of what is likely to come, and with your questions answered. Please schedule another appointment if you feel you have more to discuss.

Dr Andrew Satchell, your Mohs dermatology surgeon, is happy to meet you for a consultation before your surgery date. Some patients prefer to meet Dr Satchell on the day of surgery. Please contact his Mohs surgery coordinator on 9557 8144 to discuss which option is better for you.

Submit your admission form

Dr Kotronakis's team will have given you admission forms for the Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. You will need to fill out your details and a health questionnaire. The form is long, but the hospital is obliged to look at this information, and it helps avoid any disruptions.

Please submit the paperwork as soon as you can, rather than just before the procedure. The hospital should confirm that everything is in order, but you can call the Admissions office on 02 8514 1000 if you need to check.

To Do List

- Meet Dr Kotronakis
- Contact Dr Satchell's Mohs coordinator on 9557 8144
- Submit Lifehouse admission forms
- Check fees
- Know which medications to stop
- Call 9557 8144 on Friday before surgery for appointment time
- Wear comfortable clothes
- Stop eating from 7:30 AM
- Stop water from 11:00AM
- Arrange to be picked up
- Plan for a quiet, restful week after the procedure

Know your fees

A multidisciplinary team is involved in your care, so you will be paying up to four different fees. We will resect only what proves to be skin cancer, and subsequently perform the best from of reconstruction for you. Medicare determines your rebate by the ultimate complexity of your resection, and the form of reconstruction performed. We can tell you what your fee will be, but cannot tell you the exact rebate until after the procedure is complete.

You may need to pay fees to:

1. Dr Andrew Satchell (a quote will be provided by his practice).
2. Dr Ilias Kotronakis (a quote will be provided by his practice).
3. Your anaesthetist. The “gap” will be up to around \$100 if you have private insurance. A quote will need to be arranged if you do not have health insurance.
4. Chris O’Brien Lifehouse. Your private insurance should cover all these fees if you have health insurance. The hospital can do a fund check for you once you submit your admission forms and let you know if you need to pay an excess.

Medications and eating

You should usually continue to use all of your medications up to the day of surgery. Dr Kotronakis or Dr Satchell should have given you specific advice about continuing or stopping blood thinning medication, so contact their offices if you are not sure of what to do.

You should have a light breakfast on the day of your surgery. No eating or drinking after 7:30 AM. The only exception is water or apple juice, which you can have up until 11AM.

Being comfortable while waiting

Mohs and reconstruction is a process that can be quick, or can take hours. Multiple patients will have the procedure on the same day as you. That means that the time of the first and second parts of your procedure are hard to estimate. Unfortunately that means that you may have a long day, with a fair amount of waiting around. Be reassured that your cancer resection and reconstruction procedures will be completed in one day, regardless of how long it takes.

Dermoplast and the Chris O’Brien Lifehouse are both focused on you. You don’t need to bring anything, and we will take good care of you.

Wear clothes that are comfortable. Feel free to bring along something to keep you occupied while waiting. You can also bring a friend, who can be with you up until you go into the operating theatre for your reconstructive surgery.

The first part of your procedure: Mohs guided resection

Dr Satchell's office will contact you by the Friday afternoon before your procedure and tell you what time you should arrive at the hospital. Please call his office on 02 9557 8144 if you have not heard from them by midafternoon.

The resection will be performed at Chris O'Brien Lifehouse. Go to Level 2 Clinic C. Dr Satchell's team will be waiting for you.

The Mohs procedure will be performed under local anaesthetic. Dr Satchell will gently inject long lasting local anaesthetic in the area to be resected. This is the only part of the day that is a little sore.

The cancer is excised with a narrow edge, and a dressing is applied. Your specimen is then processed by a technician, and analysed by Dr Satchell. This process takes around 45 minutes. You will be awake and comfortable during this wait, and can have a friend with you.

This step will be repeated as many times as is needed until the cancer is safely removed. This is typically completed within three cycles, but it may be more if the cancer is extensive or tricky.

The second part of your procedure: Plastic Surgery reconstruction

You will be escorted to Day Surgery once your resection is complete. This is on Level 3, just above where you had your resection. Dr Kotronakis will come and see you at the day surgery, and see how much skin has been removed. You will then have a chance to discuss the final surgical plan.

You will also meet your Anaesthetist. He or she will be able to tell you what the best form of anaesthetic is for you. This may be more local anaesthetic (completely awake), mild sedation (feel relaxed and sleepy), or a full general anaesthetic (completely asleep). Our aim is to make sure are completely comfortable during the procedure, and have the easiest recovery possible.

Your reconstruction will be performed in a fully equipped, state of the art operating theatre with a full surgical team available.

After the procedure

You will be taken back to day surgery after your procedure. We will make sure that you are comfortable, and you can have something to eat. Pain killers, and possibly antibiotics, will be prescribed. Most patients make a quick recovery, and are able to go home soon after the reconstruction is complete. You must arrange for someone pick you up and stay with you at home after the procedure, and will not be allowed to go home unaccompanied. That is a strict rule for day surgery. We can easily arrange an overnight stay if it difficult to arrange a lift.

Some patient may need or prefer to stay overnight after their procedure. We are happy to arrange this. We can also arrange these beds at short notice if you are not feeling up to going home. The rooms at Lifehouse are all single rooms, which are modern and beautifully appointed. We are sure you will be comfortable no matter how long you stay in.

You will be given detailed written instructions about how to take care of yourself and your wound during your recovery. You should plan to take things quietly and avoid heavy exercise in the week after your procedure. We will advise you of what arrangements are needed for a postoperative wound check and suture removal. This is usually between 3 and 7 days after your operation.

You will be given phone numbers to call if you have any concerns during your recovery. We want to make this process as smooth and non-disruptive as we can, so please call us on 9588 24 94 if we can help in any way.