Mohs Surgery Pre-Operative Instructions

- **Blood Thinners:** You may continue to take your Aspirin (if prescribed by your doctor) and other blood thinners (Coumadin, Plavix, etc.) unless you have been instructed to do otherwise. Please avoid non-prescribed, over-the-counter pain medications such as Ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, Aleve, Excedrin) for 2 weeks prior to surgery. All of these medications make it more difficult to stop bleeding. *Current dermatologic surgery literatures states that the slight increased risk of intra-operative and post-operative bleeding is less significant than losing the benefit that your blood thinners provide.* Do avoid taking Vitamin E, Fish oil, and all herbal supplements, as these too prolong bleeding time. Tylenol may be used as a pain reliever during the pre- and post-operative periods.
  - If you take Coumadin, please have a routine coagulation study (PT/INR) drawn within 1 week of your surgery, and have the results FAXED to our office: 708-390-0842.

- **Pre-Operative Antibiotics:** If you require pre-medication with oral antibiotics prior to surgical procedures, please inform us of your specific condition.

- **Duration of Surgery:** The length of Mohs surgery is unpredictable, as some skin cancers grow underneath the surface. Expect multiple brief episodes of surgery followed by long periods of waiting while we process your tissue and evaluate it under the microscope. The day usually lasts 2-4 hours, but occasionally, patients spend the entire day at our office. Bring reading material, food for lunch or snacks, or a friend/family member to help you pass the time.

- **Wound Care:** The surgical site will remain bandaged for approx. 1-2 weeks following surgery. Our staff will demonstrate how to care for your wound, give you written instructions re: wound care, and provide Dr. Sheth’s direct contact information in case of a rare emergency. Usually you will return to our office within 1-2 weeks for bandage change/suture removal. To optimize bleeding, we ask that you do not plan any travel or other outings during this post-operative time.

- **Limitation of Activity:** Be prepared to limit activity for at least 1-2 weeks after surgery. This includes heavy lifting, jogging, and other strenuous activity. In addition, you may have significant swelling, redness, or bruising of the surgical site for 1-2 weeks post-surgery, especially if your cancer is on the central face (forehead, eyes, nose, lips). Icing the surgical site is an important part of the post-operative period.

- **Alcohol/Smoking:** Alcohol can increase bleeding and bruising; please avoid alcohol for at least 48 hours before and after surgery. Stop smoking – ideally for at least a few days before and 1 week after your procedure. Smoking increases your risk of complications and infection, and inhibits wound healing, thereby negatively affecting the ultimate cosmetic outcome of your surgery. The best choice is to REFRAIN entirely, but even cutting back will help.

- **If there is hair within the surgical site, please remove your hair by having a haircut or shaving the area yourself, 3 days prior to surgery.**
On the Day of Surgery:

- On the morning of surgery, please take your regularly prescribed medications, especially ones that control high blood pressure, or antibiotics that are needed prior to surgery.

- Eat a light breakfast.

- Wear comfortable, warm clothing and tops that open in the front. Please avoid pullover shirts/sweatshirts as these may disrupt your bandages while dressing and undressing.

- Do not wear make-up, nail polish, or jewelry if it will cover the surgical site. Women with a skin cancer anywhere on the face, ears or neck should not wear make-up on the day of surgery. Avoid using moisturizers and perfume.

- Arrange for someone to drive you home after surgery if your surgical site is on/near the eyelids, or if sedative medications are required.

Your comfort and care is our top priority. If you have any questions or concerns prior to surgery, please call our office: 708-323-DERM (3376).