

## Tassia C. Kostopoulos, M.D.

Dr. Kostopoulos is a board certified dermatologist and Mohs surgeon offering the latest techniques to diagnose and treat conditions of the skin, hair and nails for patients of all ages.

She graduated Cum Laude from the University of Florida, where she obtained her Bachelor of Science in Nutritional Science. She received a Masters degree in Biomedical Science from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. In 2009, she moved to Richmond to attend the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine, where she graduated as a Dean's Merit Scholarship Recipient. She completed both her internship in Internal Medicine and residency in Dermatology with the VCU Health System. She served as Chief Resident in her final year and contributed to numerous dermatology publications.

Following her residency, Dr. Kostopoulos completed an additional year of specialized training in the competitive fellowship of Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Dermatologic Oncology under her esteemed mentors, Algin Garrett, MD and Christine Rausch, MD. She mastered the technical intricacies of Mohs micrographic surgery and its sequential dermatopathology, advanced reconstructive surgery, multidisciplinary approaches to late-stage cutaneous malignancies and cosmetic dermatology. By virtue of her rigorous fellowship, she possesses the skills necessary to perform Mohs micrographic surgery and reconstruction at all levels of complexity.

Dr. Kostopoulos is board certified by the American Board of Dermatology, an active member of the American Academy of Dermatology and an Associate of the American College of Mohs Surgeons. She holds national memberships with the American Society for Dermatologic Surgery and the Women's Dermatologic Society and a local membership with the Richmond Dermatological Society. She is a licensed physician in the Commonwealth of Virginia and speaks fluent Spanish.



## Skin Cancer FAQs

**What causes skin cancer?** The most common factor in the development of skin cancer is sun exposure.

**Why should skin cancers be treated?** The two most common types of skin cancer are basal cell and squamous cell carcinoma. Basal cell carcinomas grow slowly and rarely spread throughout the body, but can be locally destructive if not removed entirely. Squamous cell carcinomas grow more rapidly and can spread to lymph nodes and other parts of the body.

**What treatments are used for skin cancer?** Methods include curettage (scraping the tissue), excision (cutting the tumor out), radiation therapy, topical cream, and Mohs micrographic surgery. The treatment modality is based on several characteristics of the skin cancer, including location, size, aggressiveness and recurrence. Your physician is knowledgeable in the various treatments.

**How can I protect myself in the future?** Early detection is critical. Studies show that people who perform skin self-exams have thinner, less advanced melanomas due to early detection. Early detection can reduce mortality by 63%. Regular skin exams by your physician are essential. Minimize your sun exposure and avoid tanning beds—studies show a 75% increase in melanoma risk when indoor tanning began before age 30.

## Insurance & Referrals

We participate with most insurance plans and will submit all claims to your insurance company. Fees for expenses not covered (cosmetic procedures, co-pays, deductibles, co-insurance, some office visits) will be collected at time of service. We accept cash, check or credit cards.

Please check with your insurance company before surgery about pre-authorization, out of pocket expenses or if a referral is required. Your surgery is an outpatient procedure performed in our Ambulatory Surgery Center. You/your insurance company could receive up to three separate bills from the physician(s) and the Ambulatory Surgery Center when utilized.

Our goal is to provide care to patients, regardless of financial status. If you have difficulties paying or understanding your bill, please contact our billing office at 804.282.4940.



## Surgical Excision

Appointment Date

Appointment Time

### Important Reminders

You **must** be able to identify your biopsy site.

Make arrangements for someone to drive you.

Do not plan surgery around an important engagement.

Do not travel outside of the area for 2 weeks after surgery.

Plan to return 1 to 2 weeks after surgery.

Continue all medications prescribed by your doctor.

Fee charged for cancellations within 48 business hours of appointment.

Verify medical insurance coverage and the need for a referral, pre-authorization, co-pay and deductibles.

## Tassia C. Kostopoulos, MD, FAAD

*Board Certified Dermatologist*

*Fellowship Trained Mohs Surgeon*

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[www.mohsvirginia.com](http://www.mohsvirginia.com)



We're pleased you have chosen our office for your surgical care. It's essential that our patients are well informed, relaxed, happy and above all, confident in our care. This brochure will help you understand how our facility works, answer questions and prepare you for surgery. Please feel free to ask any other questions regarding your medical care, fees, insurance, or office policies. We also welcome any suggestions that will help to improve the care you receive.

## Facility & Staff

Our facility is specifically designed for the treatment of skin cancer. The Skin Surgery Center of Virginia conforms to and is approved by the State of Virginia, Medicare and Joint Commission standards in design, policies and procedures, fire protection, safety and handicap accessibility. These standards are considered to be the highest and ensure the safest surgical environment, while performing surgery in a comfortable, cost-effective, outpatient setting. Our procedure and exam rooms have state-of-the-art lighting for better detection of skin cancer and visualization of the cancer's outer margins.

We take great pride in our staff's training and capabilities. The team consists of the physicians, nurse practitioner, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, medical assistants and patient care coordinators.

## Day of Surgery

Surgery is performed in a pleasant outpatient suite. Our staff will escort you into an exam room where you will consult with one of our doctors or nurse practitioner who will discuss your case with you and further explain the procedure. A local anesthetic is injected into the skin. Once the area is numb, the cancer/abnormal lesion is removed as well as a layer of tissue around the area. The procedure takes about 45 minutes. A pressure dressing is applied to the area and verbal/written wound care instructions will be given to you afterwards.

## Preparing for Your Surgery

**Pre-operative Consultation:** Consultations with our doctors or nurse practitioner are generally done the day of surgery but can be arranged prior to surgery if desired. If you're uncertain about having surgery because you are considering another form of treatment or no treatment, please call **before** your scheduled surgery date to avoid a cancellation fee.

**Biopsy Site Identification:** Occasionally, smaller cancers are difficult to identify. You **must** be able to identify your biopsy site the day of surgery. It's helpful if you take a photo of your biopsy site before it heals. Bring it with you the day of your surgery or email it to [info@mohsvirginia.com](mailto:info@mohsvirginia.com).

**Medications:** Continue all medications prescribed by your doctor, including blood thinners, aspirin, Coumadin, Plavix, Vitamin E and blood pressure medications. Studies show discontinuation of prescribed medications, even for short periods, can put one at risk for life threatening events, such as heart attack and stroke.

**Food and Drink:** Since surgery is performed under local anesthesia, you may eat and drink that day.

**Alcohol:** Alcohol promotes bleeding. We ask you to avoid alcoholic beverages 48 hours before/after surgery.

**Smoking:** Smoking can affect healing by diminishing blood supply at your surgery site. Discontinue smoking 2 days before surgery and for 1 week after. If you can't discontinue entirely, cut back to less than 1 pack per day.

**Transportation:** Make arrangements for someone to drive you the day of surgery. Patients given medicine to relieve anxiety will not be allowed to drive themselves home.

**Attire:** Wear comfortable, older clothes, avoid make-up, perfume and jewelry. If surgery is on an area covered by clothing, please wear something easy to remove.

**Cancellations:** If you must cancel surgery, please cancel 48 business hours before your surgery date. Less than 48 business hours notice will result in a cancellation fee.

## After Surgery

Please don't travel outside the area for 2 weeks so that any unforeseen post-operative events can be addressed in office. If you have any problems at home after surgery, please call our office. Verbal and written instructions for wound care will be given to you at the end of your day.

**Will I have pain and bruising after surgery?** The surgical site may be sore for several days. Tylenol and Ibuprofen are usually adequate for relief. Bruising and swelling are common and may not peak until 48 hours after surgery. Do not plan surgery around an event where your physical appearance is important as you'll be wearing a bandage for a week in most cases.

**Will I be able to return to work or be able to drive?** If you're given medications during surgery, you will not be allowed to drive yourself home. Returning to work or driving will depend on the size and location of your cancer/abnormal lesion and your occupation. Please bring all FMLA paperwork with you the day of surgery. In most cases, time off work will not be granted after surgery. Specific restrictions will be discussed the day of surgery. If you'd like to discuss this prior to surgery so arrangements can be made ahead of time, a consult is required.

**Can I exercise after surgery?** Activities, including exercise or heavy lifting, will be restricted until stitches are removed. The more activity you participate in, the more likely you may bleed from the surgery site.

**Will the surgery leave a scar?** Whenever surgery is performed, there will be a scar. Our doctors and nurse practitioner are trained in advanced reconstruction and fine suturing techniques to optimize the cosmetic outcome.

**Will I need to come back?** Suture removal and wound evaluation are usually performed one week after surgery. In some cases, visits may be needed over the next several weeks to months. Periodic visits at least once a year to your referring physician are advisable to monitor for skin cancers or signs of recurrence from previous procedures.