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HouseCall



beneath the surface

Precise, effective Mohs surgery gets to the root of skin cancer

Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the nation, with more than a million new cases each year. That's more new cases than prostate, breast, lung and colon cancers combined. Whether it's a common type of skin cancer, such as basal or squamous cell, or less common forms—skin cancer is a significant condition that requires focused, disciplined treatment. But the cure doesn't have to be as painful and protracted as you might expect, especially with Mohs surgery.

“For many forms of skin cancer, Mohs surgery is the preferred treatment,” says Jane Grant-Kels, M.D., chair of the Department of Dermatology at UConn Health Center. “Our staff has extensive experience with this cutting-edge technique.”

Mohs surgery helps to remove skin cancer, including the cancerous, microscopic roots. Tissue is removed and mapped through an innovative color-coding process, which allows doctors to excise the entire tumor without removing excessive healthy tissue. With this mapping process, the involved area is precisely identified on the patient and removed. This staged removal and mapping continues until a tumor free plane is achieved.

This minimally invasive process only requires local anesthetic and allows doctors to utilize the

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joint chiefs

The New England Musculoskeletal Institute fixes jarring joint pain

It's the anatomical equivalent of grating gears. Osteoarthritis, the slow degeneration of cartilage near joint tissue, and the related and rarer condition osteonecrosis, the death of bone tissue due to interrupted blood supply, can decrease your range of motion and even lead to painful bone-on-bone contact.

These conditions often strike the hips and can severely restrict physical activity. Simple actions, like walking up stairs or getting out of a car, become endurance tests. "Patients can be devastated when hip or knee pain limits their ability to continue an active lifestyle and participate in physically fulfilling activities such as running, playing sports, or even day-to-day activities," says R. Michael Meneghini, M.D, director of the UConn Health Center's Joint Preservation and Replacement Center within the New England Musculoskeletal Institute. UConn's experts are specially trained to effectively treat pre-arthritis disorders and arthritis in order to return patients to their active and sometimes physically demanding lifestyles. These procedures include osteotomies, impingement procedures, and arthroscopy.

"We offer many treatment options for people suffering from disability or pain because of joint problems," says Jay R. Lieberman, M.D., director of the New England Musculoskeletal Institute, professor and chairman of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery, and an orthopedic surgeon who specializes in hip and knee issues. "Joint repair or replacement, especially of the knees and hips, can help a patient take control and regain their quality of life. These are among the most successful surgeries in modern medicine, helping people get back to an active lifestyle."

Hip and knee replacement surgery can offer a new lease on life for osteoarthritis sufferers. If more conservative treatments do not work, this procedure can be a lasting solution. In these procedures, the degenerative joint is removed and a new prosthetic joint is implanted. Less invasive surgical techniques and multimodal pain protocols have facilitated more rapid post-operative recoveries.

“These are among the most successful surgeries in modern medicine, helping people get back to an active lifestyle.”

Jay R. Lieberman, M.D.

The New England Musculoskeletal Institute's wide range of treatment options cater to individuals and put a premium on controlling pain and accelerating recovery.

"Pain management starts before surgery," says Dr. Lieberman. "Medications are injected into the hip or knee joint to reduce pain, so patients can bounce back quicker to engage in physical therapy and ultimately return to a normal, active lifestyle."

CALL! To make an appointment with an orthopaedic specialist at the New England Musculoskeletal Institute in Farmington or Southington call **860-679-6600**. For more information, log on to nemsi.uchc.edu.



the fast and the injurious

Seniors need help determining when to stop driving

As family members age, there is often a painful push and pull between respect for loved ones and the acknowledgment of diminished capacities. One of the more difficult dimensions of this issue involves seniors and transportation. A potent symbol of personal freedom, driving has emotional connotations, and losing the ability to drive can lead to a radical lifestyle shift. But sometimes, family members need to intervene.

“Driving is a privilege, not a right. Most seniors are aware of that and monitor themselves,” says Patrick P. Coll, M.D., a gerontologist at the UConn Health Center. “But sometimes the family needs to step in.”

Anyone with an older family member behind the wheel should look for signs of wavering ability, such as slower driving, timid driving, getting lost in familiar surroundings, recurrent fender benders, erratic movements, and slow reaction times. If Dr. Coll has concerns about someone in his care, especially for older people with memory and judgment issues and those with early dementia, he recommends they take a driving test at a facility that can properly evaluate their skills. If there are legitimate concerns, make sure to be sensitive and subtle when broaching the topic, and have a transportation plan in place before starting the discussion. Losing independence is difficult, so try to find substitute means of transportation.



“Driving is a privilege, not a right. Most seniors are aware of that and monitor themselves,”

Patrick P. Coll, M.D.

CALL! To make an appointment with a physician who specializes in the care of older adults, call **800-535-6232**.

KNOW | MORE

UConn's HealthEcademy Educates Patients Online

Finding your way through today's complex health care system can feel like navigating a maze rigged with conflicting information and frustrating stumbling blocks. UConn Health Center's free, web-based HealthEcademy helps participants become more successful patients and patient advocates by empowering people with information to find a more direct path.

UConn's HealthyEcademy, the first program of its kind in the nation, offers practical information to help participants further their knowledge and understanding as health care decision makers.

The video sessions are presented by doctors, nurses, and educators and include slide

presentations, handouts, and useful web links.

The program modules include timely topics such as:

- A Roadmap to Reliable Health Information
- How to Make Better Health Care Decisions— Interpreting Diagnostic and Screening Tests
- Answers to Questions You Weren't Asked— But Should Have Been
- How to Choose a Retirement Community, Assisted Living Facility, and Nursing Home
- Beyond the Basics of Privacy
- Legal and Ethical Issues at the End of Life—

The Importance of Advance Care Planning
HealthEcademy is conveniently accessible anytime, day or night, that Internet access is available; simply install the Microsoft Silverlight program to begin the program.

Start empowering yourself today, visit HealthEcademy.uchc.edu.

FAST Facts

350 Number of physicians, covering more than 50 specialties, in the UConn Medical Group—the largest medical practice in Greater Hartford.

\$938 Million Amount in new Gross State Product generated by the UConn Health Center each year on average. Each dollar of state appropriation leverages \$9.20 in new GSP.

Know more — visit www.uchc.edu

beneath the surface

continued from cover

most effective reconstructive procedures after the cancer has been removed. That's why this form of surgery is often used to treat cases in more visible areas, like the face. The entire procedure usually takes between two and four hours, much of which is spent relaxing in the patient lounge while the removed tissue is being analyzed.

"This is a safe procedure that's 97 to 99 percent effective in treating basal cell and squamous cell carcinomas," says James Whalen, M.D., Mohs surgeon at the UConn Health Center. "Plus, scarring is minimized and it's unusual that patients experience serious pain afterwards." UConn's Mohs surgeons include Dr. Whalen, Hanspaul Makkar, M.D., and Siobhan Collins, M.D.


 **CLICK!** For more information about the wide range of dermatology services, including Mohs surgery, available at UConn, visit dermatology.uhc.edu. To make an appointment call **800-535-6232**.

New State-of-the-Art Location



The UConn Health Center's Department of Dermatology, the region's largest dermatology practice, has moved to 21 South Road in Farmington, just around the corner from the main Health Center campus. In the new, state-of-the-art space, UConn's 18 experts, led by Jane M. Grant-Kels, M.D., will continue to provide a full spectrum of medical, surgical and cosmetic services including:

- Total body imaging program for patients with increased risk for skin cancer
- Mohs surgery
- On-site dermatopathology lab
- Specialty services in podiatry, psoriasis, melanoma, cutaneous oncology, cosmetic dermatology and more.

 **CALL!** For directions or to make an appointment, call **800-535-6232**.

MEET OUR EXPERTS



Michael F. Collins, M.D., a board-certified internist, is now seeing patients at **UConn Health Partners in East Hartford**. He earned his doctorate at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston and completed his internship

and residency training at the Hospital of Saint Raphael in New Haven.



Nisreen Khazaal, M.D., a board-certified internist, is now seeing patients at the **UConn Health Center**. A member of the American College of Physicians, her clinical and research interests include asthma and obesity. Dr. Khazaal

graduated from the Damascus University School of Medicine in Syria and completed her residency at the William Beaumont Hospitals near Detroit.



Susan Lynch, R.N., M.S.N., an experienced nurse practitioner, is seeing patients in the **Simsbury Office of UConn Medical Group** at 381 Hopmeadow Street. She is a graduate of the University of Hartford and Saint Francis Hospital

School of Nursing. Ms. Lynch received her master's degree in nursing from Quinnipiac University.

These doctors are accepting new patients. To make an appointment or for more information, call 800-535-6232.

**OFFICES IN FARMINGTON, 263 FARMINGTON AVENUE • WEST HARTFORD, 65 KANE STREET • EAST HARTFORD, 99 ASH STREET
• SIMSBURY, 381 HOPMEADOW STREET • CALL UCONNLINK AT 800-535-6232 FOR AN APPOINTMENT.**