



**Spencer Dermatology
& SKIN SURGERY CENTER**

James M. Spencer, MD, MS

Sun damage and skin

Shirley Hartsfield had a scaly condition on her nose at the corner of her eye. When a biopsy revealed that she had basal cell carcinoma, her dermatologist referred her to James M. Spencer, MD, MS, who is board certified by the American Board of Dermatology and fellowship trained in Mohs micrographic surgery.

“I was referred to Dr. Spencer specifically because he uses Mohs surgery,” explains Shirley.

Mohs surgery is a highly specialized technique for precise, minimally invasive surgical treatment of skin cancer. It involves removing successive layers of tissue and immediately examining them with a microscope to determine at what point all signs of cancer have been excised. According to the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins, the Mohs surgery cure rate for primary skin cancer is a remarkable 99% and is 95% effective for recurrent skin cancer.

“I’ve always lived in the sunny South,” reflects Shirley, “and although I am very careful to apply sunscreen, I have been dealing with basal cell skin cancers for about 25 years now.”

“Here in Florida where we have both a lot of sunshine and an outdoor lifestyle, we have to be especially watchful because all skin cancers are caused by

excessive exposure to ultraviolet light,” observes Dr. Spencer. “Additionally, ultraviolet light also causes *photoaging*. Many of the changes in our skin that we attribute to the inevitable consequences of the passage of time such as wrinkles, brown spots, and red spots, are, in fact, caused by sun damage.

“However, today we can significantly and substantially improve the results of sun damage safely and easily.”

“Liver spots”

“Once Dr. Spencer completed my Mohs surgery and cosmetic follow-up, I was so pleased and confident in him that I decided to ask him about the myriad of brown spots on my arms,” recalls Shirley.

“Brown spots, or *lentigos*, resemble freckles and may have been referred to as *liver spots* by your grandmother,” notes Dr. Spencer. “However, these

Shirley works very hard at combating sun damage, and she has a great partner in Dr. Spencer.



FHCN PHOTO BY NERISSA JOHNSON

discolorations have nothing to do with the liver or with aging. Instead, they are caused by sun damage.

“Fortunately, something as simple and safe as light can be used to remove them. For Shirley, I used *intense pulsed light*, or IPL. Through this technique, very short, high-energy bursts of light are delivered to

the discolorations. By choosing the correct colors of light, we are able to safely and effectively remove different targets. In Shirley’s case, the target was brown spots, but by varying the type of light delivered, other targets such as hair or red spots can be removed.”

Red spots are dilated blood vessels, which people often mistakenly refer to as *broken blood vessels*.

“Using IPL, light penetrates the skin and is absorbed by the target, and the target is destroyed,” educates the doctor. “In the case of red spots, the blood vessels simply close.

“Best of all, the light has no negative effect on the surrounding normal skin.”

“I feel young,” laughs Shirley. “Dr. Spencer did a fantastic job cosmetically on my nose, and there is no sign of basal cell carcinoma returning.

“Also the light treatments made a big difference. My arms look so much better.” **FHCN**—Kris Kline

Here for you...

Dr. Spencer and his staff look forward to meeting the readers of Pinellas Health Care News. For additional information or to schedule an appointment, please call (727) 572-1333. The office is located at 900 Carillon Pkwy., Suite 404, in St. Petersburg.



James M. Spencer, MD, MS, is board certified by the American Board of Dermatology. He received his medical degree from the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Columbia University, New York City. Dr. Spencer completed his residency at Columbia Presbyterian and a fellowship in Mohs Micrographic Surgery at the University of Tennessee. Along with his private practice, he serves as a professor of clinical dermatology for Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York City. Dr. Spencer is a member of the American College of Mohs Micrographic Surgery and Cutaneous Oncology, American Academy of Dermatology, American Medical Association, American Society for Dermatologic Surgery, International Society for Dermatologic Surgery, Association of Academic Dermatologic Surgeons, American Academy of Cosmetic Surgery, and American Society for Laser Medicine and Surgery. He is published extensively and lectures widely both nationally and internationally on skin cancer and skin surgery. He is fluent in both English and Spanish.