Is this done under a general anaesthetic?

In most cases yes. Sometimes if a lesion is being removed from a very important part of the brain it may be done under local. I can do this way as the brain itself does not feel any pain.

How long does a typical operation take?

Usually in the order of 2 hours operating time. It can take up to 12 hours in some cases.

Is there a problem with long anaesthetic?

Not usually.

Will I lose all my hair?

Some surgeons will shave the whole head but this is uncommon. Most will only shave the area of concern. A few surgeons will not shave at all.

What is a Craniotomy?

This is where a piece of bone is removed from the skull to gain access to the brain.

What is a Biopsy?

Suspected Tumours

To Remove:  
BRAIN tumours  
Meningioma  
Ependymoma  
Glioma/Glioblastoma  
Cerebral Metastasis  
Cerebral haemorrhages (blood clots)  
Brain infection  
Vascular Lesions  
Anterior/inferior haemangiomas  
To Repair:  
Cerebral Aneurysms  
Anterior/inferior haemangiomas  
To Biopsy:  
Suspected Tumours

What is the chance I will lose all my memory?

This is unusual and depends on the location of the brain that the surgeon is operating on. Memory is mostly in the temporal lobe and in some areas in the frontal lobe. If the surgeon is not in that region the risk would be small.

What is the chance I will end up in a coma?

This is unusual and depends on the location of the brain that the surgeon is operating on. Consciousness is mostly in the brainstem. If your surgeon is operating there the risk is there. If the surgeon is not in that region the risk would be small.

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Will I lose all my hair?

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What is a normal surgical out of pocket cost?

The government when they brought in medicare costed surgical procedures at a reasonable fee structure. The figure that they have set is the rebate. Anything above that you have to pay.

The raise of these fees has not kept up with the CPI or cost of living. In real terms they are a long way behind the current needed fee structure. The figure that they have set is the rebate. Anything above that you have to pay.

Why is there an out of pocket cost?

You should judge your surgeon on experience and results and not how much they charge.

What is the more expensive surgeon better?

As in all things different people charge different amounts. Some excellent surgeons may only charge the no out of pocket fee. You should judge your surgeon on experience and results and not how much they charge.

Is the more expensive surgeon better?

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Will I be confused post-operatively?

Most scars are behind the hairline but some will be visible (especially if you have no hair).

Will I be confused post-operatively?

Most surgeons do not charge out of pocket to patients with cancer. For non-cancer surgery you should discuss this with your surgeon. It will probably be in the order of $800.

What will the cut on my head be?

One or two small holes are drilled and these joined up with a special drill.

How will the bone heal back into the skull?

One or two small holes are drilled and these joined up with a special drill.

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We try not to remove any at all. There are some parts of the brain that you can do without such as some of the temporal lobe and in some areas in the frontal lobe. If the surgeon is not in that region the risk would be small.

Does the bone heal back into the skull?

If the bone is replaced, very little as it protects the brain and it would take a significant knock to dislodge it. If the bone is not replaced for any reason then the risk is still small. If you think about it do you not bump your head that often?

Will my hair grow back?

Yes! You may find that there will less growth over the scar

Will your scar be visible?

Some surgeons will shave the whole head but this is uncommon. Most will only shave the area of concern. A few surgeons will not shave at all.

What will the cut on my head be?

One or two small holes are drilled and these joined up with a special drill.

How will it hurt?

We try not to remove any at all. There are some parts of the brain that you can do without such as some of the temporal lobe and the right frontal lobe. In most cases yes. Sometimes if a lesion is being removed from a very important part of the brain it may be done under local. I can do this way as the brain itself does not feel any pain.

How much will it hurt?

The incision will not hurt much at all. You commonly have a headache after the procedure which can be moderately severe in only a few patients. The type of procedure inside the head will dictate the amount of headache. Ask your surgeon.

Where will the cut on my head be?

As in all things different people charge different amounts. Some excellent surgeons may only charge the no out of pocket fee. You should judge your surgeon on experience and results and not how much they charge.

How much brain can be removed?

The common risks are: From the Anaesthetic  
Infection  
In the Skin / Bone / Brain  
Seizure  
Postoperative blood clot.

Neurological deficit e.g. weakness / d/umy / loss of speech / visual change etc.

WHAT am I at risk from the hole in my head immediately after the surgery?

Usually in the order of 2 hours operating time. It can take up to 12 hours in some cases.

Can the bone be replaced for any reason?

If the bone is replaced, very little as it protects the brain and it would take a significant knock to dislodge it. If the bone is not replaced for any reason then the risk is still small. If you think about it do you not bump your head that often?

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How is it held back in place?

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