

LYMPH NODE SCAN (SENTINEL NODE SCINTIGRAPHY/MAPPING)

Appointment

Date:

Time:

This test is about your lymph nodes

Why has your doctor recommended this test?

Sentinel node scintigraphy, or mapping, is used to identify the first lymph node(s) that drains a certain area of the body, usually the site of a primary tumour, or an area where a tumour has been previously removed.

The lymphatic system is one way tumours spread to other sites in the body, so it is important to see the drainage pathway of a tumour as part of your treatment plan (Sentinel simply means first – so we are identifying the first node in the lymph drainage pathway).

This test does not identify whether there has been actual spread to the sentinel lymph node(s) – it only identifies the node(s) so that they can be checked for pathology at a later time, usually during surgery scheduled later that day or the following day.

Sentinel node scans are commonly used for breast cancers and melanomas.

You can drive to and from the test if you want to, but you are more than welcome to bring a friend or family member for support. Our offices are clearly signposted with ample onsite parking.



Before your test

No preparation is required for this test. However, please ensure you follow any preparation instructions given to you by the hospital or clinic where you will be having your surgery following the study.

Please inform the technologist if you are pregnant, there is a possibility you might be pregnant, or if you are breastfeeding, prior to your scan.

What happens during the test?

The test takes between 45-60 minutes on average.

For a breast test:

- 1 A small amount of mild radioactive liquid will be given under the skin of the breast tissue. It feels similar to having a blood test, does not make you feel any different, and there are no side effects.
- 2 The liquid takes about 20 minutes to get to the sentinel node(s).
- 3 If your surgeon has not requested imaging, you will be free to leave once the injections are finished. The surgeons will locate the sentinel node(s) at the time of surgery using a gamma probe in the theatre.
- 4 If your surgeon has requested imaging to be done as well, during the 20 minute waiting period, you will remain in a private room and are free to read, relax or talk to any friends or family you have with you.
- 5 You will be asked to lie down on the imaging bed, and the camera will be over your breast.
- 6 The Imaging process then begins and images are collected over the next 10-20 minutes.

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- 7 Once the node(s) has been identified, it will be marked so that the doctors can more easily locate it during surgery.

For a melanoma test:

- 1 You will be asked to lie down on the imaging bed, and the camera will be positioned over the area of interest.
- 2 A small amount of a mild radioactive liquid will be given in the area surrounding the tumour or excision site. It does not make you feel any different, and there are no side effects.
- 3 The Imaging process then begins and images are collected over the next 30 minutes.
- 4 Once the node(s) has been identified, it will be marked so that the doctors can locate it during surgery.

Should I be worried about the Radiation dose?

There is no need to worry. The radiation dose from this procedure is relatively low and it's similar to what you would be exposed to in a standard x-ray.

However if you are worried or have any concerns, please share them with any of our staff, they're there to help.



After the scan

We'll ask you to wait in the waiting room while we make sure we have everything we need. This only takes a few moments and once done we'll let you know so you can go home or back to work.

We'll then have our specialist reviewers analyse your results and they will report back to your doctor within 1-2 days of doing the test.

If you have any questions at all, let us know.

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