

SENTINEL LYMPH NODE MAPPING (LYMPHOSCINTIGRAPHY)

FOR BREAST CANCER

Purpose of the study

This study locates the lymph node that lymphatic vessels drain into from the area of a lesion. This lymph node is called the sentinel lymph node. The sentinel lymph node's location will be marked on your skin with a pen so that the surgeon will find it more easily when you have surgery.

A marked sentinel lymph node could be healthy or diseased. We will not know if cancer has spread to the sentinel lymph node until it has been examined by the surgeon and the pathologist.

Preparing for the study

- If the study is done on the morning of your surgery, follow the instructions you received for the surgery.
- No preparation is necessary for the nuclear medicine study.

What to expect at the study

A doctor will inject a small amount of radioactive tracer into your breast through a fine needle. After the injection, we will wait 20 minutes for the tracer to make its way into the sentinel lymph node. Sometimes the tracer will be injected next to a tumour under radiological ultrasound guidance. This will be followed by a two-hour wait for the tracer to reach the lymph node.

You will lie on your back for the imaging. We will use a gamma camera to take images from three different angles and mark the location of the sentinel lymph node on your skin with a pen. If the imaging identifies more than one sentinel lymph node, all of them will be marked. This is completely normal.

Duration of the study

Depending on your waiting time, the study will last from one to three hours.

Study results

After the study you will have the images and documents you need to take with you for your surgery.

After the study

After the study, you can return to the department where you will wait for your surgery. If the procedure will not take place until the following day, you can go home for the night. In that case, avoid holding young children or being in close proximity to them for more than half an hour.

You can bathe normally, but be careful not to rub off the marks on your skin.