

Nuclear Medicine

Your Sentinel Node Scan

Your doctor would like you to have a Nuclear Medicine Sentinel Node scan and has arranged for you to visit our department. We would like your visit to be as pleasant as possible and hope this leaflet will answer some of the questions you may have.

WHAT IS A SENTINEL NODE SCAN?

A sentinel node scan is a test to show which lymph node drains your tumour. This is called the sentinel node. A small amount of radioactivity is used to obtain pictures of this node to guide your surgeon during your operation.

IS THE SCAN SAFE?

Yes. We will ensure that the amount of radiation you receive is as small as possible. The radioactivity leaves the body very quickly and it will not make you feel sick or sleepy.

DO I NEED TO PREPARE FOR THE SCAN?

No, you do not need to do anything special for this test but you should follow any instructions you may have been given about preparing for surgery.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

Shortly after you arrive you will be given an injection in the skin around your tumour. We will then take a series of pictures of this area over a period of up to an hour, until we have found the Sentinel Node. We will then mark the position of the node on your skin.

HOW IS THE SCAN PERFORMED?

The scan involves taking pictures while you lie on a bed. The camera is positioned close to the part of your body being studied. The camera is quite open and quiet and patients do not normally feel claustrophobic.

IS THERE ANYTHING I SHOULD TELL THE STAFF BEFORE THE SCAN?

Would women please tell us if you are pregnant or if you think you may be pregnant. Also, please inform us if you are breast-feeding. Women between the ages of 12 and 55 will be asked to sign a form on the day of their test to confirm they are not pregnant. If there is any doubt, we are legally obliged to perform a pregnancy test before proceeding.

Please tell the staff if you are planning to travel abroad within one week of your scan.

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE SCAN?

Please follow any instructions you may have been given about preparing for your surgery. There are no other restrictions due to the Nuclear Medicine scan.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE RESULTS?

We cannot give you the results of your test. We will send a report to the doctor who asked for the scan before your surgery.