

Procedure Information: Lymphoscintigraphy

WHEN IS A LYMPHOSCINTIGRAPHY ORDERED?

Lymphoscintigraphy procedures are ordered to determine location of sentinel lymph node for surgical removal.

PATIENT PREPARATION

There are no dietary or medication restrictions for the actual nuclear medicine procedure, however you will need to follow surgical restrictions provided by the surgeon or Preadmission Staff.

PROCEDURE

Once brought to the department, a certified nuclear medicine technologist will verify your identity, explain the procedure and take you into the scanning room. Once the nuclear medicine physician arrives, a “timeout” is called. That means we stop what we are doing and re-verify the identity of the patient and what breast we will perform the test on. Once satisfied, we will administer the injection under the skin of the affected breast. **Please note the injection is very small, usually 1-2 drops of liquid. It is mixed with an agent to minimize any discomfort. Most patients will feel the slight pinch but nothing more.**

Twenty minutes after the injection you will be placed on padded imaging table while a camera comes next to you. Two images (front and side) will be taken. If the isotope migrates to the sentinel node, the procedure is stopped and you will be transported to Same Day Services. If the material did not migrate (is common and nothing to worry about) we will wait for at least 20 minutes and repeat the same pictures. Once the second set of images is done you will be transported to Same Day Services.

A board certified nuclear medicine physician will interpret your scan. The results will be available to the surgeon prior to your operating room time.

HOW LONG WILL THIS TAKE?

You will be transported from Same Day Services to the nuclear medicine department. Upon arrival, a certified nuclear medicine technologist will verify your identity and explain the procedure. (Timeframe: 10 minutes)

You will then be taken into the scanning room. A board certified nuclear medicine physician will discuss the procedure and inject the isotope under the skin of one or both of your breast(s). (Timeframe: 5 minutes)

After the injection we will need at least 20 minutes for this material to circulate. After that waiting period, we will take two pictures from the front and side. (Timeframe: 20 minutes).

If the isotope has migrated to the sentinel node the procedure is completed and you will return to Same Day Services. If the isotope did not move, we will wait an additional 20 minutes and repeat the same two pictures. Once the second set of images is complete, you will be transported back to Same Day Services.

A typical Lymphoscintigraphy including injection and scan is 1.5 hours.