

Breast Imaging

San Radiology & Nuclear Medicine



breast lymphoscintigraphy patient information

SO YOU NEED A LYMPHOSCINTIGRAPHY OF THE BREAST. YOU MAY LIKE TO KNOW...

Breast lymphoscintigraphy (sentinel node localisation) is a procedure used to identify and mark the lymph nodes (there may be more than one) which are the first to receive lymphatic fluid drainage from around the tumour in the breast. This is performed prior to breast surgery in order to help the surgeon determine which lymph nodes (if any) need to be removed for further examination by a pathologist.

HOW IS A BREAST LYMPHOSCINTIGRAPHY PERFORMED?

Breast Lymphoscintigraphy is performed in the Nuclear Medicine department of San Radiology, on the day of surgery or the day before surgery. Nuclear Medicine is located on Level 3 of the San Clinic.

On arrival in the department you will be seen by our Nuclear Medicine Physician and you will be asked about your medical history, medications, and allergies.

The Nuclear Medicine Physician will then give you up to four small injections of a radioactive tracer around the area of interest in the breast. There are no side effects from these injections.

You will then be asked to massage the area for 10 minutes to stimulate the lymphatic flow. A qualified Nuclear Medicine Scientist will then take you through to a gamma camera where a series of pictures are taken. This will take 20 minutes.



Image courtesy of GE Healthcare

San Radiology/MRI Level 3, Tulloch Building
Nuclear Medicine/PET-CT Level 3, San Clinic
185 Fox Valley Road, Wahroonga NSW 2076

Operated by **Adventist HealthCare** Limited
ABN 76 096 452 925

A second set of pictures are taken about 2 hours after the injections. These will take about 45 minutes. Once the sentinel node is identified on the images the position is marked on your skin with a marker which should not wash off in the shower, but please do not scrub them. These marks guide the surgeon during the operation.

The time it takes to localise the sentinel node can vary greatly between patients. In some cases, the sentinel node may not be visualised on the images at all. This however does not mean your operation will be unsuccessful as surgeons can use other methods to localise affected lymph nodes.

A report and films will be prepared for you to take to the operating theatre.

Is there anything I need to do to prepare for this procedure?

There is no specific preparation required.

Please make sure you bring all relevant imaging studies and reports as the Nuclear Medicine Physician needs them to review prior to performing the procedure. There are no other specific preparation requirements for a breast lymphoscintigraphy test.

If you are having other examinations on the same day please notify our staff as the order of your examinations must be carefully planned.

How long does the procedure take?

You will be with us in Nuclear Medicine for approximately 3-4 hours.

Are there any specific precautions or issues for me to consider after the injections?

The amount of radiation you are exposed to in this test is very small, comparable to a couple of chest x-rays.

There are no precautions you need to take after the test.

The radioactive tracer you were injected with breaks down through decay over time.

FURTHER INFORMATION

On the day of the procedure we will review the process in full with you, and will be happy to answer any questions you may have. We will obtain your written consent as part of the operation.

Of course, if you have concerns before the day you can contact San Radiology & Nuclear Medicine on **(02) 9480 9850**.