

## Information and Preparation

### Sentinel Node Imaging (Melanoma)

#### Description

This is a diagnostic test which examines the lymph nodes in your body nearest your tumour. You will have this test done on the day of your operation.

The date and time of your surgery will be given to you by your surgical team, along with where you need to go in the morning. You will first be admitted to the hospital onto a ward and then brought to Nuclear Medicine via a porter.

If you would like to speak to a member of the nuclear medicine team before your appointment, please call us on the number provided at the end of the information.

#### Preparation

There is no special preparation for this test. However, please follow any instructions given from the surgical team.

— **If you are pregnant or breastfeeding**

for all Nuclear Medicine studies, patients aged between 11-55, will have their pregnancy and breastfeeding status checked.

Radiation can be harmful for an unborn baby. If you are, or think you may be, pregnant, you must tell us as soon as possible, ideally before attending your appointment.

Radioactive dyes can be passed into breast milk. Please tell us before you come for your test if you are breastfeeding and we can advise you whether you will need to stop for any amount of time

#### Procedure

In the department, a member of the Nuclear Medicine team will have a chat with you before the procedure to explain what is written here and answer any questions. You will then be taken to our camera room where a trained member of the nuclear medicine team will inject a small amount of a radioactive dye, just under the surface of the skin around the melanoma site. The dose of radioactivity is very low, and the needles are very small. There are 4 injections to be given, which should take a totally of 1 minute to give. You will then be made comfortable on our scanner where a special type of camera takes a number of pictures to show which lymph nodes the radioactive dye goes to first. These are the sentinel nodes. This can take between 5 minutes and approximately 90 mins, it varies for every patient. Once we have found the Sentinel node, we will do an additional 3D scan to give us and the surgeons a better idea where these lymph nodes lay in your body. This will take 20 mins. At the end of the 3D scan we will mark where the lymph node/s are on your skin with a marker. You will then be taken back to the ward. The surgeon will use the skin mark/s to help them find the lymph node when you are in surgery.

You will not feel sick or drowsy after the injections or in the weeks afterward.

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## Results

Your scan will be examined by a Consultant Radiologist who will send a report and pictures to your surgeon before your operation. Outcome of your surgery will be discussed with you on your next review appointment.

### **What are the risks and benefits from the radiation?**

You receive a small radiation dose from the radioactivity in the injections when having a sentinel node study. The radiation dose is equivalent to the amount received from natural sources of radiation in about two months. Additionally, you will have a low dose CT as part of your imaging and this will also give you an additional small radiation dose. The risks from the overall radiation are minimal and there are no obvious side effects from having these injections or the scan.

The radiation dose to other people around you is very low and you do not need to keep away from anyone if you are having this procedure.

The Benefits of this test are to enable the surgeons to identify your sentinel lymph node.

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