

Patient information

Nuclear Medicine Sentinel Lymph Node Scan

Your doctor would like you to have a Nuclear Medicine 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. Should you have any questions regarding your appointment please contact us on one of the telephone numbers below between 9:00am and 5.00pm Monday- Friday.

0300 131 4797 or 0300 131 5853

WHAT IS A SENTINEL LYMPH NODE SCAN?

A Sentinel Node scan is a test to identify the first lymph node that drains from 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 when you have your surgery.

IS THE SCAN SAFE?

The amount of radiation you receive is as small as possible and is similar to other X-ray procedures. 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?

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 your surgery.

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

Female patients should tell us if they are pregnant, think they may be pregnant, or breast-feeding. Women between the ages of 12 and 60 will be asked to sign a form on the day of their test to confirm they are not pregnant. A pregnancy test can be done if there is any doubt.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

You will be asked to remove all your clothing above the waist. A hospital gown is provided, and you will be asked to lie on your back. An injection of a radioactive tracer is given into the affected breast(s). There are no side effects from the injection however it may sting a little. You will then be asked to gently massage the area for a few minutes to encourage movement of the tracer into your lymph nodes. Please be aware this test is not looking for disease in your lymph nodes.

Once the Sentinel lymph node can be seen on the scanner a scan is taken lasting approximately 20 minutes. The node is often seen within 15 minutes of the injection however sometimes it takes longer for this to happen; therefore, we may ask you to return later for the images.

We will mark the position of the node on your skin using a marker pen. Do not wash this mark off your skin as it is required by your surgeon.

PRECAUTIONS AFTER THE INJECTION

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. If you are planning to travel abroad within 7 days after your appointment, please inform the staff during your appointment.

WHAT CAN I DO AFTER THE SCAN?

You can go home or to work. You can drive a car and eat and drink normally.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE RESULTS?

Your surgeon will review your scan images before your surgery.

CONSENT

Although you consent for this treatment, you may at any time after that withdraw such consent. Please discuss this with your medical team.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

British Nuclear Medicine Society (BNMS)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is not provided to replace professional clinical advice from a qualified practitioner.

YOUR COMMENTS

We are always interested to hear your views about our leaflets. If you have any comments, please contact the Patient Experience Team –Tel: 0300 131 4731 or email: esh-tr.patientexperience@nhs.net

HAND HYGIENE

The Trust is committed to maintaining a clean, safe environment. Hand hygiene is very important in controlling infection. Alcohol gel is widely available for staff use and at the entrance of each clinical area for visitors to clean their hands before and after entering.

OTHER FORMATS

If you require any of the Trust leaflets in alternative formats, such as large print or alternative languages, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Department.

Tel: 0300 131 4434 Email: esh-tr.AccessibleInformation@nhs.net

After reading this information are there any questions you would like to ask? Please list below and ask a member of our team.

Reference

The following clinicians have been consulted and agreed this patient information:

Dr Emma Owens, Consultant Radiologist, ESHT

Dr David Sallomi, Consultant Radiologist, ESHT

The directorate group that have agreed this patient information leaflet:

Core Services

Next review date: October 2024

Responsible clinician/author: Mr Christopher Salt, Nuclear Medicine Modality Manager

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