

# Sentinel lymph node

## *PATIENT INFORMATION - What You Need to Know*

### DESCRIPTION OF EXAM

Sentinel node biopsy is a surgical procedure used to determine whether cancer has spread beyond a primary tumor into your lymphatic system. Sentinel node biopsy involves injecting a radioactive tracer material that helps the surgeon locate the sentinel nodes during surgery.

### PREPARING FOR YOUR EXAM - What to do before your exam:

Patients should following all prep given to them by their surgeon for the day of surgery. No additional preparation is required by the nuclear medicine department. Patient should not be pregnant. If patient is breastfeeding please notify technologist at the time of exam. Wear comfortable clothing and avoid wearing jewelry and metallic objects. Arrive 30 minutes before your scheduled exam time to allow for registration.

### DURING THE EXAM

A few hours before surgery the patient comes to nuclear medicine and gets injected in around the area of interest (usually the breast, or melanoma site) first with lidocaine to numb up the area, and then with a radioactive isotope in the same area. The Radioactive material then travels through the lymphatic system and collects in the sentinel lymph node.

If images are requested by the patient's surgeon, images begin immediately after injection and are taken over the area of interest and surrounding areas to help the surgeon better localize the sentinel lymph node during surgery. Imaging will take about 30mins to 1hour.

### AFTER YOUR EXAM

Drink plenty of fluids after your exam to help wash out the radioactive tracer from body more quickly. There are no side effects from the radioactive tracer, and the amount of radioactivity you received is a very small amount that is not harmful to you or anyone else. If breastfeeding, it is recommended to pump milk and discard for 6 hours after exam.