NHS
Calderdale and Huddersfield
NHS Foundation Trust

Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy for Breast Cancer

Your appointment for your Biopsy is

Date: _____

Time: _____

What is the Sentinel Node (SN)?

The sentinel lymph node (gland) are the first lymph nodes in your armpit to which breast cancer can spread.

What is Sentinel Node Biopsy (SNB)?

By removing the sentinel lymph node, we can find out whether the breast cancer has or has not spread to the armpit nodes.

This is important information as it helps us to advise you about the stage of your cancer and the best type of breast cancer treatment for you.

Recent studies have shown that in selected cases removal of the sentinel lymph node is just as safe and accurate as traditional armpit surgery which removes more nodes.

compassionate care

Side effects of Armpit Surgery (Axillary Surgery)

For some patients armpit node removal can cause temporary shoulder stiffness, nerve pain, loss of feeling and/ or permanent lymphoedema (swelling of the arm).
The side effects of armpit surgery are believed to increase with the number of nodes removed. This means if we remove the sentinel node(s), only the risk of complications may be reduced.

Finding the Sentinel Node

Radioisotopes (Highlighter) for x-rays

Before surgery you will have a small amount of radioisotope injected into your breast where your tumour/ cancer is. This fluid travels to the sentinel lymph node and the radiographer will mark the position.

Please note this procedure is carried out at
Huddersfield Royal Infirmary, X-ray Department, Lower Ground Floor.

During surgery a blue dye will be injected into the breast. This also travels to the sentinel node. The surgeon using a special radiation detection probe can then find the sentinel node which is also blue.

Very rarely it is not possible to identify the sentinel node in which case the surgeon may have to carry out traditional (arm pit) axillary surgery.

What happens next?

The pathologist will examine the sentinel lymph nodes under the microscope; this may take 3 – 4 weeks. If the sentinel node contains cancer cells, you may require further surgery to your armpit to remove remaining lymph nodes.

What are the Advantages of Sentinel Node Biopsy?

- Less discomfort and earlier mobility in the shoulder/arm
- Less risk of lymphoedema
- Shorter hospital stay and quicker recovery.

What are the Disadvantages of Sentinel Node Biopsy?

- The blue dye may discolour urine, stools, tears etc for a few days.
- The breast skin may be discoloured for up to a few months and very occasionally longer.
- Allergic reaction to the blue dye can occur but is rare. This can be treated.
- Injection of radioactivity into the breast may give slight discomfort.
- If the pathologist finds the sentinel lymph node(s) contain cancer, you may require a second operation to the armpit.
- False positive and false negative failure rate of sentinal node usually less than 10%.

Allergic reactions to the blue dye can occur in as many as 2 patients out of 100. Most of these reactions are not serious, but occasionally severe reactions can occur that could be life threatening. An anesthetist will be looking after you in theatre and will take all possible steps to keep you safe.

If you wish to discuss this procedure further please do contact your Breast Care Nurse who will be happy to answer any queries.

Breast Care Nurses

Huddersfield Royal Infirmary
Telephone
01484 355515
01484 355525
01484 355524

Calderdale Royal Hospital
Telephone
01422 222723

Reference:
Sentinel lymph node biopsy Handbook 2004 Royal College of Surgeons of England.

If you have any comments about this leaflet or the service you have received you can contact :

Clinical Nurse Specialist
The Macmillan Unit
Calderdale Royal Hospital
Telephone No: (01422) 222700

www.cht.nhs.uk

If you would like this information in another format or language contact the above.

Potřebujete-li tyto informace v jiném formátu nebo jazyce, obraťte se prosím na výše uvedené oddělení

Jeżeli są Państwo zainteresowani otrzymaniem tych informacji w innym formacie lub wersji językowej, prosimy skontaktować się z nami, korzystając z ww. danych kontaktowych

ਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਪ੍ਰਾਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ,
ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

اگر آپ کو ی معلومات کسی اور فارمیٹ یا زبان میں درکار ہوں، تو
برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا شعبے میں ہم سے رابطہ کریں.

"إذا احتجت الحصول على هذه المعلومة بشكل مغاير أو مترجمة إلى لغة مختلفة فيرجى منك الاتصال بالقسم المذكور أعلاه"

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