

Your Isotope Sentinel Node Scan Explained

What is a Sentinel Node Scan?

This is a scan using an injection of a very small amount of a radioactive tracer to locate the lymphatic nodes under your arm. Depending on when your operation is scheduled this test will either be performed the day before or on the morning prior to it. The injection and scan will take place in the Main X-ray department, but the tracer remaining in the breast tissue and lymph nodes will help the surgeon to locate the lymph nodes during the surgical procedure.

What does the scan involve?

It involves a little injection of a small amount of radioactive fluid into the affected breast. The fluid then gets taken up into the tiny lymphatic vessels and passes into the under arm area. Your scan will be performed in one of two ways:

Either

- The injection is performed the day prior to surgery then pictures will be taken the following morning prior to your surgery. The pictures take only 30 minutes to complete and are taken with you lying comfortably on the bed.

Or

- The injection is performed on the morning prior to your surgery with the images performed 2 hours later with you lying comfortably on the scan bed for 15minutes. During the 2 hour delay you will return to the ward to rest.

What about the radiation?

Only a very small amount of radioactive fluid is injected equating to about the same amount of radiation as 2 mammograms.