

Sentinel Lymph Node Mapping Procedure Information

What should I expect when undergoing a sentinel lymph node biopsy?

Patients undergoing a sentinel lymph node biopsy have a complex schedule involving appointments prior to surgery.

Your injection will be done either the afternoon or morning before surgery. Your surgery scheduler will let you know the date and time.

It is important to report directly to the Nuclear Medicine Department located on level B1 of the University Hospital, to the lymph node mapping procedure. You will spend about two hours in the nuclear medicine department.

Locating the sentinel node

The Nuclear Medicine Department will inject a weak radioactive solution to make the sentinel node radioactive and visible on x-ray. It is important to remember that the solution will cause the lymph nodes to show up on the x-ray as black dots. **This does not mean that there is cancer in the lymph nodes,** but is a way to find the sentinel lymph node so it can be tested. You will spend approximately 2 hours in nuclear medicine department between the injection and the completion of the x-ray. You will be awake for this portion of the procedure and after it is completed you will report to admitting for surgery.

What should I expect after surgery?

- Minor pain and bruising
- Some patients develop a small fluid collection about the size of a golf ball at the site of the lymph node biopsy, at the site of the sentinel lymph node biopsy. This usually does not bother patients too much and will

resolve on its own within a few weeks of surgery. Contact Plastic Surgery Clinic if it persists longer than this, becomes painful, red, or becomes larger than a golf ball.

- You may experience some numbness in the back of your upper arm or inner thigh near the site of your sentinel lymph node biopsy. This will improve over time, but might not completely resolve

Who should I call if I have questions?

- (734) 998-6022, Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- After hours and on weekends, call Hospital Paging at (734) 936-6267 and ask for the Plastic Surgeon on call.

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