

Having a vulval sentinel node injection and scan

Department of Nuclear Medicine

Information for Patients

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What is a vulval sentinel node injection and scan?

This is a safe and simple procedure. It uses a small amount of radioactivity to let your surgeon find the sentinel lymph nodes. These are the first lymph nodes where any fluid from the vulva will drain.

You must tell us if:

- You have problems with your memory or learning difficulties.
- You need an interpreter (please tell us at least 3 days before your appointment).
- You are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or have just missed a period.
- You are breastfeeding. This is because radioactive substances can come out in breast milk. You may be advised to stop breastfeeding for a short time.
- You have any incontinence problems. This is because radioactive substances are present in your pee (urine). You may need special instructions because of this.

Your Nuclear Medicine appointment

The appointment depends on when you are having your surgery. The Nuclear Medicine procedure will take place in the Nuclear Medicine service either:

- on the day before surgery (late morning or early afternoon), or
- on the day of surgery (early in the morning)

**Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

Please note that the Nuclear Medicine procedure is not always done at the same hospital as your surgery.

Your letter will have the date, time and location of your Nuclear Medicine appointment. If you are not sure of anything please contact us on the numbers at the end of this leaflet.

How do I prepare for the scan?

You do not need to follow any special preparation before the Nuclear Medicine procedure.

When you have the surgery itself, your surgeon should already have explained what you need to do.

What happens during the injection and scan?

- You will come to the Nuclear Medicine Department
- We will explain the test to you. You may ask any questions that you have
- We will ask you to get changed into a surgical gown
- We will put local anaesthetic cream around the cancer site to numb this area. After a short wait (for the cream to take effect, around 10 to 30 minutes), you will have your injection
- The injection is really a few injections. Small radioactive injections (usually 4) are given around the area of the vulva affected by cancer. You should not feel any ill effects. Some patients do get a stinging feeling. This will slowly go away in the minutes after injection
- **Note, this drug is made from human serum albumin which comes from human blood donations. These are tested according to European Economic Community (EEC) Regulations**
- We will use our scanner (called a gamma camera) to take images at different times and at different angles around your pelvis
- We then do a CT scan
- The camera finds the radiation from the injections and maps the locations of the sentinel nodes
- The camera will not cause any pain or discomfort and is fairly quiet
- When you are having the scans you will need to lie flat and still for some time. This can be up to 45 minutes at a time
- After the first images, we may ask you to get off the couch and move around for about 20 minutes, if we feel this will improve picture quality
- The whole process in Nuclear Medicine should take about 2.5 hours

Surgery appointment

You should have had details of the date, time and place of your admission for surgery from the surgical team. If you have not had this, please contact them directly as soon as possible.

What happens after the scan?

You will be radioactive for 24 hours after your injection. To lower any risk to yourself and others during this time we ask you to:

- Drink plenty of extra fluids when able (so after the surgery).
- Flush the toilet well after use
- Wash your hands well each time you use the toilet.
- Avoid long contact (more than 30 minutes) with anyone who is or maybe pregnant, small children and babies.

Are there any risks?

It is very unlikely that you will have any side effects from the radioactive injection. There is a small risk linked with the radiation you get by having this scan.

Ionising radiation can cause cell damage that may, after many years or decades, turn cancerous. We are all at risk of developing cancer during our lifetime. The normal risk is that this will happen to about 50% of people at some point in their life.

The dose of radiation you will get from this test is very small. It is the same dose you would get from the environment in about 9 months. Having this test will add only a very small chance of this happening to you. In fact, the risks from missing a serious disorder by not having this test may be considerably greater.

How will I get my results?

Your scan will be looked at by a radiologist. The results passed on to your surgical team to aid in planning your next operation.

Useful information

You may wish to bring a relative or friend with you. Due to the type of examination, friends and relatives will not be allowed into the room during the procedure, unless we need their help.

Please do not bring children with you to your appointment. Radiation is more dangerous for children and pregnant women than for adults. Please do not bring them into the Nuclear Medicine Department unless they are coming for a scan.

If you need hospital transport, please see our website <https://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk>



Directions to Nuclear Medicine

- Leicester Royal Infirmary – Level 0, Sandringham Building (behind the multi-storey car park).
- Glenfield Hospital – the department is best reached by the east entrance.

Contact details

For specific information about your Nuclear Medicine procedure, please contact (answering machine checked during office hours):

Leicester Royal Infirmary: 0116 258 5627

Glenfield Hospital: 0116 258 3850

Leicester Radiopharmacy Service: 0116 258 5579

If you have a question about your medical condition please contact your GP or the doctor who made your referral.

Further information

Useful websites:

www.bnms.org.uk

www.radiologyinfo.org

www.patient.co.uk

www.informed-scan.com/

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔
على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਵਿਰਧਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk