

SCINTIGRAPHY OF THE SENTINEL LYMPH NODE IN BREAST CANCER

Scintigraphy is an imaging technique used to evaluate the metabolic processes in the tissues and lesions of the human body. A small amount of radiolabelled substance involved in metabolism will be injected into the patient's body to obtain an image. In the present case, it is a technetium-99m-labelled substance that accumulates to the closest lymph node to which cancer cells may have spread.

Simultaneously, computed tomography (CT) is performed – with or without intravenous administration of contrast agent, as appropriate.

The test is used to determine the location of the sentinel lymph node.

Inform your doctor and medical staff if:

- you have experienced claustrophobia or the fear of enclosed spaces;
- you are pregnant, breastfeeding, or will come into close contact with children or pregnant women following the procedure;
- you are unable to lie still.

The test does not require special preparation.

The procedure

The duration of the procedure, including preparation, is about 3–5 hours. Before the test, a nurse will speak to you and provide detailed explanations on the procedure. The tracer will be injected into the breast. After the tracer has been injected, you should wait 2–4 hours until it has accumulated in the sentinel lymph node. While waiting, you can temporarily leave the department with the consent of the staff of the Department of Nuclear Medicine.

During the recording, you will be asked to lie on your back on the examination table. The recording will last a maximum of 40–60 minutes.

After the study:

- follow your normal diet and drink plenty of fluids to foster removal of excessive tracer from the body;
- breastfeeding should usually be discontinued for 24 hours; removed breast milk should be discarded. Detailed instructions will be given to you by the personnel in the department;
- study results will be sent to referring physician.

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