

## Patient information

# Blue dye and Sentimag assisted axillary node sampling

**After your visit to the Outpatient Clinic, you may have some questions about your forthcoming admission and operation. The following information may be of some help, but please feel free to telephone with any queries.**

This is an operation to remove some of the glands under the armpit. This is done through an incision in the armpit. A blue dye will be injected into the breast tumour in order to locate the lower sentinel lymph node, at the same time an injection of magnetic beads will also be used to locate the lymph nodes.

### Coming into hospital

You will be seen in Pre-Assessment prior to your admission. You will be seen by a doctor or nurse and given a full examination to ensure you are fit for a general anaesthetic. The doctor or nurse will organise any tests thought to be necessary.

### The day of the operation

You will be asked to attend ward F5 on the day of your surgery but you could be moved to another ward if a bed is not available there. You will be advised at pre-operative assessment when to stop eating and drinking, usually six hours prior to surgery. This means no food, dairy products including milky tea/coffee, chewing gum or boiled sweets. You are allowed to have sips of plain water up until two hours before surgery. Pre-assessment will also advise which medication to take or omit.

### After your operation

It is normal to pass urine that is tinged with blue dye for 24 - 48 hours after surgery.

Your skin may also look grey after surgery but it will settle after 24 - 48 hours.

You will notice blue dye staining of the skin on the breast from the blue dye and brown staining of the skin from the Sentimag injection. This may last up to one year.

The wound may be covered by a dressing or surgical glue.

You may experience some discomfort and numbness of the affected arm. If you experience pain, please ask the ward nurses for painkillers.

## **Going home**

You should be able to go home the same day as your surgery. Before you are able to go home we will need to check the following:

- You have had something to eat and drink and do not feel nauseous.
- You have passed urine.
- Your observations are stable (temperature, blood pressure and pulse).
- Your dressing is clean and dry.
- Transport home is available as you are not permitted to drive.
- You have a responsible adult to stay with you for the first 24 hours.
- Any pre-existing medical conditions are stable.
- You are pain free and feel well enough.

If you have any concerns about going home or any other issues please discuss with the Breast Care Nurses or the ward staff.

You will be given an outpatient appointment to attend for the results of the surgery prior to leaving hospital.

## **When you go home**

You may feel tired for the first couple of weeks so it is helpful to have someone to help with the household duties.

You should avoid lifting heavy bags etc, with your affected arm for six weeks, but it is important to continue the arm exercises. Swimming is a good form of exercise. Try it after about 4 - 8 weeks if your wound has healed.

It is possible for fluid to build up in the area of the operation. If this happens it can be easily drained. If you experience any swelling, leakage or increased discomfort in the wound area please contact your GP or Breast Care Nurse.

You may drive when you can safely perform an emergency stop and turn around to reverse safely without discomfort, usually about two weeks. Return to work when you feel able, usually 2 - 4 weeks.

## **If you have any concerns**

Please contact the **Breast Care Nursing Team**: Telephone: 01284 713281  
Monday to Friday 8.30am to 4.30pm.

***Donations in support of our work may be made to the West Suffolk Hospital Breast Cancer Fund.***

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*

*<https://www.accessable.co.uk/organisations/west-suffolk-nhs-foundation-trust>*



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