

LYMPHOSCINTIGRAPHY

What are they used for?

The lymphatic system is a network of small channels similar to blood vessels that circulate fluid and cells of the immune system throughout the body. Lymph nodes, which act like a filter for foreign bodies are located in this network. Radiotracers that are taken up by the lymphatic system can help identify the sentinel lymph node (the first node which drains from a tumour), to help assess the stage of cancer and create a treatment plan. Radiotracer flow through the lymphatic system can also help identify points of blockages or lymphedema, and lymphatic disease in its earliest stages.

What is involved?

Immediately after the injection, a series of images of the area of the body that your doctor is interested in are taken. The type of study you are having will determine the location of your injection and the number of scans performed.

- *Melanoma cancer patients.* Two to five doses of radiotracer are injected into the skin or other tissue surrounding the site of the melanoma. Images may be taken of the arms and underarms, legs and groins, or head, neck and chest, or other areas, depending on the site of the melanoma. Imaging for this procedure is usually done in 30 minutes.
- *Breast cancer.* The radiotracer may be injected in multiple sites near the tumor and/or around the areola, or nipple. The breast, chest and underarm regions will be imaged. Imaging for this procedure is usually done in 30 minutes.

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- *Leg or arm swelling (oedema)*. The radiotracer is injected between the first and second fingers or toes of each hand or foot. Both the swollen and healthy arm or leg will be imaged so that the two sides can be compared. You may also be asked to exercise lightly for about 10 minutes (such as walking, hand gripping or lifting exercises) before additional images are taken. Imaging for this procedure is usually done in 30 minutes.

How should I prepare?

There is no preparation required for lymphoscintigraphy. Like all nuclear medicine scans at TeleMed, these Scans are bulk billed and so it is important that you bring your Medicare card with you on the day.