

## Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy for Head and Neck

### About Lymph Nodes

Head and neck cancer can spread to nearby lymph nodes, which are part of your immune system. We can check if the cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes by performing a sentinel lymph node biopsy. The sentinel nodes are the ones your cancer would most likely spread to based on the primary cancer's location.

### Sentinel Lymph Node Biopsy

A sentinel lymph node biopsy is a surgery to find and remove the sentinel nodes. This helps us determine the right treatment plan for you. Your surgeon may do a sentinel lymph node biopsy as part of the surgery for your cancer.

### What Should I Expect?

Before your surgery, you will go to the nuclear medicine department in the University Hospital. Your doctor will inject a dye into the area around your tumor. A few hours after the injection, you will get a scan which will allow your surgeon to identify the sentinel lymph nodes which are the nodes that contain the dye.

In the operating room, your doctor will surgically remove the lymph nodes in your neck that contain the dye.

The lymph nodes will be sent to the lab where they will be tested for cancer. We will get the results in a few days.

### What do the results mean?

We will review your results with you at your postoperative visit.

A negative result means that there was no cancer in the lymph nodes. A positive result means that we found cancer cells in the lymph nodes.

### What do I need to do after the biopsy?

After the biopsy, you will need to rest so you can heal. Follow these steps:

- Wash your hands after using the bathroom, before eating, and before touching the area of your surgery.

- Try to move and walk around more each day.
- Get good nutrition and drink plenty of fluids.
- If your team recommends you use compression clothing or equipment, follow their directions.

**The dye we inject for the procedure is blue. This can turn your urine blue/green for a few days after surgery. This is a normal and you don't need to be concerned.**

### When to call for help

We can help you if you have any problems after you go home. Call us immediately at 801-587-4566 if you have any of the following:

- Increasing pain, redness, or warmth at your surgery area.
- More blood or fluid coming from your surgery area.
- A fever 100.4°F (38°C) or higher.
- Pain you cannot control with medicine.
- Difficulty breathing or congestion in your chest.
- Difficulty eating and drinking that doesn't improve over time.

### Questions?

Call our clinic at 801-587-4566 or message us through MyChart.