

SENTINEL NODE BIOPSY

A **sentinel node biopsy** is an analysis of the first node where the cancer is to spread.

Usually, a blue dye is injected by the surgeon and a blue node is identified in the axilla at the time of surgery. This node, or a couple of nodes (if more then one node turns blue) will be submitted to the pathologist for evaluation to see if the cancer is spread to that node.

If that node(s) is (are) involved, then additional nodes are taken for a axillary node dissection. This could involve the removal of 6- 10 nodes. This is the traditional axillary node dissection .

The best way to explain a this procedure is if you can imagine a train, if the front car , or the first node , is not involved, the data has shown that the remainder of the nodes(the other cars in the the train) are also usually not involved.

This procedure is to access the status of the lymph nodes in cancer patients that do not appear to have spread on clinical examination prior to surgery.

This procedure is not for patients who appear to have spread prior to surgery. This group of patients will need to have the traditional axillary dissection as discussed above.