



## Procedure Information Sheet

### Introduction

Breast cancer may spread from the breast to involve the lymph nodes in the axilla. This operation can make a definite diagnosis and treatment for axillary lymph node metastasis.

In addition, axillary lymph node dissection/clearance is necessary if lymph node metastasis is confirmed on sentinel lymph node excision/biopsy.

### Indication

Breast Cancer

### The Operation / Procedure

1. The operation is performed under general anaesthesia.
2. Axillary lymph node dissection/clearance is usually carried out at the same time as breast conserving surgery or simple mastectomy.
3. If breast conserving surgery is performed, a separate skin crease incision in the axilla may be created. No additional axillary wound is required if mastectomy is performed at the same time.
4. The level I and II axillary lymph nodes are removed.
5. A drain which is connected to a vacuum bottle is placed in the axillary region to decrease fluid accumulation in the wound.

### Before the Operation / Procedure

Same as Mastectomy or Breast Conserving Surgery.

### After the Operation / Procedure

Same as Mastectomy or Breast Conserving Surgery.

### Risk and Complication

1. Wound pain
2. Wound infection
3. Bleeding (may require re-operation to evacuate the blood clot)
4. Hypertrophic scar and keloid formation may result in unsightly scar
5. Lymphoedema
6. Nerve injury including long thoracic nerve, thoracodorsal nerve and rarely brachial plexus
7. Injury to vessels
8. Frozen shoulder and chronic stiffness
9. Numbness over axilla
10. Seroma

### Alternative Treatment / Investigation

Sentinel Lymph Node Excision/Biopsy

### Disclaimer

This leaflet only provides general information pertaining to this operation / procedure. While common risks and complications are described, the list is not exhaustive, and the degree of risk could also vary between patients. Please contact your doctor for detailed information and specific enquiry.

### Reference

1. Smart Patient Website by Hospital Authority: Axillary Dissection (2020)
2. Specialty Advisory Group (Breast) by Hospital Authority: Axillary Dissection (2021)

### Patient's Label

Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hospital No: \_\_\_\_\_  
Episode No: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_