

If you've undergone axillary lymph node clearance, follow these guidelines to ensure a smooth recovery.

- Gradually return to your normal activities after surgery.
- Start using your operated arm for everyday tasks, like brushing your teeth or bathing, as soon as the day after surgery.
- Begin shoulder range of motion exercises the next day after surgery.
- During radiation therapy, continue doing the recommended exercises to maintain strength and flexibility.
- Preferably use the unaffected arm for blood pressure measurements, injections, and blood draws. If necessary, these procedures can be performed on the operated arm, as there is no strong evidence linking them to lymphedema.
- Avoid tight jewelry, clothing, or elastic bands on the operated arm or fingers.
- Wear gloves while gardening, using tools, or handling chemicals to prevent skin injuries.
- If you get a scratch, bite, burn, or cut, wash the area immediately with soap and water, and apply antibiotic ointment.
- Avoid lifting heavy objects on the surgical side for 4 weeks post-surgery. Start with light weights (2-3 kgs) and gradually increase, monitoring for any signs of swelling.
- Use a thimble when sewing and a finger guard when cutting vegetables.
- Report any signs of redness or warmth immediately to minimize the risk of developing lymphedema.

**Evidence Based
Personaised Care for
Breast Cancer**



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION :

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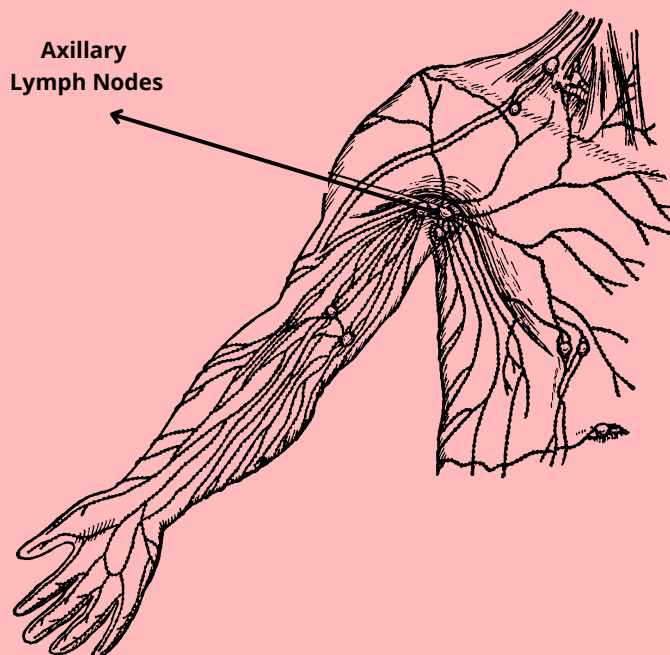
**AXILLARY
LYMPH NODE
SURGERY**

Axillary Lymph Node Surgery

This brochure will help you understand your surgery.

Lymphatic System

- The lymphatic system is made up of :
- Lymph Fluid: A clear liquid that helps boost your immune system.
- Lymph Vessels: Small tubes that carry lymph fluid away from tissues.
- Lymph Nodes: Tiny, bean-shaped structures that filter out harmful substances like bacteria, viruses, and cancer cells from the lymph fluid.



Lymphatic System

A sentinel lymph node biopsy checks if cancer has spread from the breast to the lymph nodes in the armpit.

Procedure

- A radioactive tracer or green dye is injected around the tumor.
- A blue dye is also injected before surgery.
- The dyes help locate the first lymph node(s) under the arm that drain the breast.
- Your surgeon may make a small incision in the underarm area to remove these nodes for examination.

Post-Surgery

- Blue dye may turn your urine green or blue for a few days.
- If cancer cells are found in the sentinel nodes, an axillary lymph node clearance may be performed.
- Some women may feel numbness near the inner arm and incision site.
- There is a 5% risk of lymphedema with this procedure.
- There are no restrictions on using the arm for blood draws or blood pressure readings after a sentinel lymph node biopsy.

What is an Axillary Lymph Node Clearance?

Axillary lymph node clearance is done when cancer has spread to the lymph nodes in the underarm.

Procedure:

- An incision is made in the underarm area.
- All lymph nodes in the underarm are removed.

Post-Surgery:

- Some women may experience numbness near the incision site, which is usually temporary but can be permanent.
- There is up to a 30% risk of developing lymphedema after this procedure. See the Lymphedema Fact Sheet for more information.

Do I Need to Take Any Special Precautions After Lymph Node Surgery?

If you have undergone a sentinel lymph node biopsy, no special precautions are needed.

- Gradually return to your normal activities.
- Start shoulder range of motion exercises the day after surgery.

Refer to the "Post-Operative Guidelines and Exercises" for suggested activities.