

# Groin Dissection

## Information for patients

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You have been given this leaflet to give you more information on the surgical procedure - Groin Dissection.

### What is a Groin Dissection?

A groin dissection is the name of a surgical procedure which removes lymph glands from your groin.

### Why do I need a groin Dissection?

Your plastic surgeon will have explained that, as a result of investigations you have had, there have been cancerous cells identified within the lymph nodes or glands in your groin.

Lymph nodes or glands are a filtration system of the body, with their primary function being to catch any virus and/or infection and stop it from spreading. Sometimes, if a person has had a skin cancer diagnosis, some of the cancerous cells can migrate to the lymph nodes closest to the affected area. The trapped cancer cells in the lymph node can grow and multiply, and then spread to the next lymph node and so on.

The surgical procedure of a groin dissection is offered with an aim to remove affected lymph nodes from the groin.

### What happens to me?

This kind of surgical procedure requires you to have a general anaesthetic. This means you will be put to sleep throughout the surgery, and you will need several days recovery in hospital.

The operation involves making a cut/incision at the top of your leg and removing the lymph nodes.

After the operation you may have a surgical drain in your leg to collect any extra fluid the body is producing as a result of removing your lymph nodes. This may have to stay in place for several weeks after the surgery. You may also wake up from your operation with an intravenous drip to give you some fluids and keep you hydrated. You may also have an oxygen mask on to help you recover from the anaesthetic.

You will have either stitches or staples to keep the wounds secure and some dressings on top. The nurses on the ward will look after these for you.

### What are the risks of the surgery?

As with any surgical procedure your Consultant will discuss the risks of this surgery with you and weigh up these risks against the benefits of the surgery.

Specific risks which you may face having a groin dissection are:

Numbness to the skin - Because of the extent of the surgery, sometimes the patient can experience numb patches on the skin. Sensation may or may not return over the course of months.

Seroma – This is a collection of clear ‘sterile’ fluid that your own body has produced. However, the lymph nodes that would normally deal with the fluid are no longer there and so you may require a few hospital visits to have this drained for a number of weeks after surgery, until your body adjusts.

Lymphoedema – This is swelling of the leg due to the lymph nodes no longer draining the fluid.

## How long will I be in hospital for?

There is no specific timeframe for this procedure as each patient’s care will depend on how they are recovering as individuals. An estimate can be discussed with your surgeon so that you can prepare your loved ones and dependants for the time that you will be in the hospital.

## Is this the end of my treatment?

A groin dissection surgery can sometimes be main treatment, or it may be offered in conjunction with other therapies. These will be discussed by the expert team and offered to you with full consideration of your wishes. You are part of the decision-making process in your care and can voice any concerns.

## Who should I call if I have any Questions?

You may or may not have met once of our Clinical Nurse Specialists in Clinic. Their role is to support you, inform you and your family and be a point of contact for you to ask questions. You can contact them via the Cancer Navigation Hub 0300 123 1600.

For more information on the Cancer Navigation Hub please scan this QR code:



## It's OK to Ask

When you understand what's going on with your health, you can make better decisions around your care and treatment.

