Sentinel lymph node

Remember this topic in cancer in general and especially breast cancer

It is the first node draining certain organ (the first one in the way of lymph when returns from breast for example)

If we have a patient with breast cancer for example and the surgeon will do mastectomy for her (or other operations for breast cancer such as wide local excision (just removing the mass and some surrounding normal tissue), sometimes he injects certain dye to mark the first lymph node draining that breast (the sentinel lymph node) then he sends this lymph node to the pathologist to use a fast and rapid technique to examine sections of this node on the microscope while the patient is still on operating table (this technique is called: frozen section, which is different from the slower routine histopathological preparation)...then the pathologist will tell the surgeon rapidly if this node is involved by cancer or not...this is important for the surgeon to know if he should remove more lymph nodes if the sentinel lymph node is involved by cancer or it is enough for him if the sentinel lymph node is not involved...because if it is not involved the nodes after it will not be involved (it is the first node in the lymph way as we said)

Removing lymph nodes by the surgeon during mastectomy is called: axillary dissection or axillary clearance

As we said “sentinel lymph node” is not only for breast cancer