

## Pre-Surgical Assessment: Nurse's Error Linked To Post- Op Infection.

The patient had a lengthy history of surgeries to remove tumorous lumps from her breasts.

A post-operative infection occurred after one of her surgeries. The infection led to additional surgeries and eventually to full bilateral radical mastectomies.

Prior to the surgery in question a nurse at the hospital completed a pre-surgical assessment form. The form asked whether the patient had had a complete blood count in the previous fourteen days. The nurse erroneously checked off that a recent CBC had been done. The most recent CBC was actually several months earlier.

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***The physicians would assume that the recent CBC, which was not actually done, would have been checked for elevated white counts indicative of a possible infective process.***

***The physicians believed it was appropriate to proceed with the surgery. In hindsight it is now known there was an infective process underway that should have delayed the surgery.***

SUPERIOR COURT OF NEW JERSEY  
APPELLATE DIVISION  
May 30, 2007

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The Superior Court of New Jersey, Appellate Division, acknowledged there were plausible arguments the surgeons themselves were at fault for not verifying there was a recent CBC, but yet the court refused to disturb the jury's verdict faulting the hospital's nurse. **De Stasio v. Kocsis**, 2007 WL 1542607 (N.J. App., May 30, 2007).