

General statements made in this leaflet do not apply in every case, as each patient is an individual. Your doctor will advise you of any specific aftercare.

We hope this leaflet has answered some of your questions.

If you have any questions, or require further information please contact one of the nurses using the contact details beneath.

Useful Phone Numbers

Lincoln Breast Unit: 01522 537662

Boston Breast Unit: 01205 445998

Grantham Breast Unit: 01476 593945
Email: breastteam.grantham@ulh.nhs.uk

References

If you require a full list of references for this leaflet please email patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.



If you require this information in another language, large print, audio (CD or tape) or braille please email the Patient Information team at patient.information@ulh.nhs.uk

Nipple Areola Micropigmentation (Tattooing)

Breast Care Services

www.ulh.nhs.uk

This leaflet provides an overview of having nipple areola micropigmentation (tattooing) after breast surgery.

Following breast and nipple reconstruction surgery, colour can be added to create a natural looking areola. Nipple areola micropigmentation or tattooing is a nurse led service where the nurses are fully trained in the techniques.

The procedure creates a semi-permanent image of the areola and nipple if required for women who have undergone breast reconstruction.

Benefits

The aim is to improve the cosmetic appearance of the breast by creating as closely as possible a nipple/areola colour that matches the existing nipple, if present. This may have a positive effect on improving body image and boosting self-esteem.

Risks

As this is an invasive procedure, micropigmentation is not without risks.

These include:

- Not achieving an exact colour match
- Scarring
- Uneven pigment colour
- Slight skin irritation or allergy to pigment
- Infection
- Fading of pigment

What factors may affect the results?

The result of micropigmentation is partially determined by variations in skin type and can be affected by:

- Medication
- Natural skin overtones
- Skin characteristics (dryness, oiliness, sun damage, thickness, colour and acidity)
- Lifestyle such as alcohol intake or smoking
- Individual healing ability

The procedure

All equipment used is sterile and the needles are disposable, single use only.

During your consultation you will be involved in the siting of the tattoo and matching the colour of the pigment. An anaesthetic cream will need to be applied to the tattoo area an hour prior to the procedure to minimise discomfort, although you may feel vibration from the tattoo handset. It takes approximately 30 to 40 minutes to complete depending on the individual requirements.

The pigment is applied using a pen-like device with fine needles within it that move up and down rapidly, penetrating the skin to a depth of 2 to 3 millimetres. Different techniques are used to build up the colour. Following the procedure a dressing will be applied.

Over the next 14 to 21 days your tattooed area will go through these stages of healing:

Heal: the body's own natural defences will create scabs to protect the area whilst healing.

Peel: after a few days, when the tattooed area is healed, the scabs will fall off.

Do Not Pick off the scabs from the treated area as this will result in pigment loss.

Fade: once the scabs have healed and fallen off the tattooed area, you will see a lighter shade of the implanted colour. After 4/6 weeks the pigment in the tattoo will have settled and this will be the colour of your nipple and areola.

Most patients require 2 to 3 initial treatments 8 weeks apart to achieve the desired outcome.

You should be able to resume normal activities immediately, but avoid the use of cosmetics, excessive perspiration and exposure of the area to the sun until healed as this can cause pigment changes.