



Micro-pigmentation (medical tattooing)

Information for patients from the Maxillofacial Unit

What is micro-pigmentation?

Micro-pigmentation is a service that is available at East Kent Hospitals. We use this procedure to create or enhance the image of an areola and nipple for patients who have had breast reconstruction.

The pigment is applied using a hand held machine, which uses sterile needles that make tiny holes into the surface of your skin, allowing colour to be introduced to create shading. These needles are only used once.

What will happen before my procedure?

Before your treatment is carried out, you will have a consultation with the technician. A detailed medical history will be taken, please make sure that you bring to this consultation a list of any medication you are currently taking.

The procedure will be discussed with you, please use this time to ask hospital staff any further questions or raise concerns.

Are there alternatives?

You may decide not to have the micro-pigmentation. Please note you have the right to withdraw your consent for treatment at any time.

Are there any risks?

Some of the risks of the procedure include the following.

- Not achieving an exact colour match with your existing areola and/or nipple.
- Scarring.
- A slight spreading of colour outside your areola.

- Uneven pigment colour.
- Infection.
- An allergy to the pigments used.
- Flattening of your nipple.

These risks will be discussed with you before your procedure.

How many treatments are needed to achieve the final result?

After their first consultation, most patients need at least two treatments with approximately eight weeks between the two. As the pigment used is semi-permanent, a degree of colour fading is quite common and further follow-up treatments may be needed in the future.

What may affect the results?

Micro-pigmentation is an art process and not an exact science; therefore results will vary from patient to patient. The results of micro-pigmentation partly depend on the individual skin type of the patient but can also be affected by:

- medication
- natural skin tones
- skin characteristics (dryness, oiliness, sun damage, acidity)
- lifestyle, such as alcohol or smoking; and
- an individual's healing ability.

What are the treatment procedures before, during, and after my procedure?

Before

- You will have a consultation with the technician.
- You will be asked for your consent before they begin your procedure.
- Photographs will be taken of the area to be treated.
- If needed, local anaesthetic would have been prescribed by your consultant or GP; you will need to apply this at home before coming for each treatment session. It is supplied as a cream to help numb the area.

During

- The area will be cleaned with an antiseptic wipe, removing the anaesthetic cream.
- The technician will outline the area for tattooing, and with your involvement a pigment colour will be chosen to match the shade of your other nipple.

- The technician will guide the machine over your skin, gradually building up the colour effect.
- The treatment will take between 30 and 90 minutes.
- The procedure should not be painful, although some tingling can be expected.

After

- The area will be cleaned, photographs will be taken, and an ointment and dressing applied.
- You will be given an aftercare sheet to take home.
- It is important to consider that you will need to keep the treated area dry while it heals. We advise you to avoid chlorinated water (pool, spa, jacuzzi) for at least two weeks after your treatment.
- For further information about after care, please speak to your technician.

Other information

If you ever have a MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan, the tattooed area may show up on the scan. Some patients have reported feeling a tingling sensation. If this happens, please tell your radiologist.

Further information

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact:

- Rachel Jenner, Head Maxillofacial Prosthetist

Telephone: 01233 651859 (Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4pm)

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 783145 (tel://+441227783145), or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net)

Patients should not bring large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals website (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/information-for-patients/patient-information/>).

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