

Nipple Areola Tattooing

Aftercare

This leaflet explains about returning to your everyday activities after your nipple tattooing. If you have any further questions, please speak to a doctor or nurse caring for you.

When can I leave hospital?

You will be able to drive yourself home on the same day or arrange for someone to accompany you home.

Looking after my wound

The dressing, which is applied immediately after tattooing, should remain in place for at least 24 hours as the areola may continue to leak or bleed.

You can remove the dressing and shower after 24 hours. Before showering with clean hands, apply a light coating of petroleum jelly or Vaseline to protect the pigmented tissue. This provides a temporary sealant to protect the damaged tissue. Avoid using the water jets and soap on the affected area.

Do not pick, peel or pull the crust if it appears. This will result in pigment loss and the tattooed area can appear uneven. Let these fall off naturally, usually within 7-10 days.

The wound will go through the healing phases of heal, peel and fade. You will notice slight fading of the pigment and softening of the colour as it fades.

It is advised you apply a small amount of 50/50 cream or Vaseline cream to the treated area for the next 3-4 weeks.

Important information after procedure

- Avoid giving blood for at least four months
- If you require an MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scan in the future, please tell your radiologist that you have had a micropigmentation procedure. This type of pigment shows up as an artefact on the scan and you may experience a tingling sensation.

Will I be in pain?

Most patients do not have sensation in the area to be treated since breasts are often numb following reconstruction. However, if you do experience pain you may take a simple painkiller such as paracetamol.

When can I get back to normal activities?

Generally, you can resume normal activities following the procedure. You can do household chores i.e. cooking, cleaning and food shopping. You can go back to work the day after the procedure although, depending on what type of job you have, the clinical nurse specialist will inform you when you can resume work.

Until the treated area has healed, please do not go to the gym, sauna, jacuzzi / pool or sunbathe. Over exposure to the sun will cause fading and colour change.

What should I do if I have a problem?

Watch for the following once you are at home.

- **Bleeding.** The clinical nurse specialist will ensure any bleeding has stopped in the treated area before you leave the hospital. In rare cases, if you bleed after leaving hospital, apply firm pressure to the area for 15 minutes. If it doesn't stop, continue to apply pressure and go to the nearest emergency department (ED or A&E).
- **Infection.** Signs of infection include redness, swelling, increased pain, heat and discharge from the tattooed area. Contact your GP or the clinical nurse specialist straightaway if you notice any of these signs, as infection will be treated with oral antibiotics. Out of normal working hours go to the nearest emergency department (ED or A&E). **Do not** delay getting medical attention, as infection can become life threatening if left untreated.

Will I have a follow-up appointment?

A follow-up appointment will be made to see you in the plastic dressing clinic approximately 7-10 days after the initial tattooing.

You will also have a follow up appointment at the nipple tattoo clinic at 6-8 weeks post procedure. Six weeks is the time it takes for the pigment to settle to its final colour. Sometimes further tattooing is required if it appears uneven or if the colour is not a good match.

Over time the tattoo will fade and this is natural as it is semi-permanent, therefore top up tattoos are required in the future. This is generally after twelve to eighteen months.

Useful sources of information

www.finishingtouchesgroup.com

www.breastreconstruction.org

www.breastcancercare.org.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact the clinical nurse specialist on 020 8725 0473 (Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 4.00pm or email

Jovita.devera@stgeorges.nhs.uk

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.

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