

# Micropigmentation Clinic (medical tattooing)

## Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery

Information for Patients

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### Introduction

Micropigmentation (medical tattooing) is a service available from the Department of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery within Leicester's Hospitals.

### Who can it be used for?

We can use micropigmentation to

- create or enhance the image of an areola and nipple for women who have had breast reconstruction.
- to add colour (pigment) to a reconstructed nipple.

Areola re-pigmentation may be needed after other breast procedures or physical changes.

Tattooing can also be used in

- the reshaping of cleft lips or redefining lip borders in people who have had physical trauma or surgical reconstruction.
- Eyebrows can also be created on patients who have lost their hair from scarring, such as burn scars.

### How is it done?

The hand-held machine holds small needles. These make tiny holes into the surface of the skin. This allows colour to be introduced to create shading. These needles are only used once.

Before your treatment is carried out, you will have a consultation at the Micropigmentation Clinic. A detailed medical history will be taken. The procedure will be discussed with you. Treatment will normally start on your first visit, but an allergy patch test may be needed first.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

## What will happen before the procedure?

- You will have a consultation and we will talk to you about your medical history and any allergies.
- We will ask for your consent to have the procedure done. Please ask if you have any questions about the procedure and any risks linked to it. You can change your mind at any time.
- Photographs may be taken with your consent of the area, before and after your treatment.
- We will assess your skin and any sensitivity of the area, and any actions will be discussed with you.

## What will happen during the procedure?

- The area to be tattooed will be cleansed and prepared.
- The area will be outlined, and the colour will be prepared and colour-matched.
- The treatment will take between 30 minutes and 1½ hours, depending on the treatment needed.
- The appointment time can be anything between 1 to 2 hours.

## What will happen after the procedure?

- The area will be cleaned, and an ointment and cling film will be applied.
- An aftercare sheet will be given to you to take home.

## Frequently asked questions:

### How many sessions will I need?

You may need a few sessions before the right colour or effect is achieved. Usually 2 to 3 sessions with a gap of about 8 to 10 weeks in between is enough.

### Who will carry out the tattooing procedure?

Fully trained health care professionals will carry out the procedure.

### Will it hurt?

Some people have more feeling than others; we will discuss this and assess during your consultation and manage as needed.

### What are the risks?

- Allergy to pigments used; an allergy 'patch' test is available if assessed as needed.
- Infection.
- Swelling around the treated area, usually lasting 2 or 3 days.
- There can also be some crusting of the tattoo.



- Scarring may occur, but it is unlikely.
- There is a possibility that the colour will not match exactly compared to your natural nipple areola.
- Flattening of the reconstructed nipple.
- Skin breakdown over the treated area.
- Micropigmentation is an art process and not an exact science, so results will vary from patient to patient.

**If you ever have an MRI / CT scan please tell your doctor who specialises in reading X-rays (radiologist) of your medical tattoo. The tattooed area may show up on the scan. Some patients have reported feeling a tingling feeling.**

**Laser treatments should be avoided to the treated area as this can alter the colour of the tattoo.**

#### **Some comments from patients:**

“Made the world of difference - my chest feels part of me.”

“Very pleased with every aspect of the service.”

“I feel the likeness to my real nipple is unbelievable.”

“I feel more confident.”

“I feel like me again - confident.”

#### **Where can I find more information?**

If you have any further questions please contact us at the clinic on 0116 258 5328.

These websites offer more information that may be helpful:

- [www.katiepiperfoundation.org.uk](http://www.katiepiperfoundation.org.uk)
- [www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk)
- [www.lets-face-it.org.uk/](http://www.lets-face-it.org.uk/)
- [www.breastcancercare.org.uk/breast-cancer-information/treating-breast-cancer/surgery/reconstruction](http://www.breastcancercare.org.uk/breast-cancer-information/treating-breast-cancer/surgery/reconstruction)

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔  
على هذه المعلومات بلغةٍ أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

જે તુમીં ઈચ નાજવારી વિમે હેર ઢામ્મા હિચ ચાહુંદે હે, ડાં વિરખા વરવે હેઠાં હિંડે ગાદે નંબર 'હે ટૈલીફોન વરે।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

**If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)**