

Having a custom-made artificial nipple/ areola prosthesis

Prosthesis Clinic

Information for Patients

Last reviewed: July 2026

Next review: July 2029

Leaflet number: 1260 Version: 2

Introduction

We often offer nipple prosthesis after breast reconstruction surgery. We make custom-made nipple prostheses out of silicone. This is made to match your other nipple. This includes the areola which is the circular area of darker skin that surrounds the nipple. We use a colour matching machine to get the correct colour of your nipple.

What will happen during my clinic appointments?

You do not need surgery for this treatment. You will normally need to have 2 to 3 appointments. A trained member of staff (prosthetist) will see you for the treatment. A nurse or assistant may also be present.

Prosthetists are specifically trained to work with prostheses, like artificial limbs and other body parts. A prosthetist in the Maxillofacial Service makes all nipple-areola prostheses. They are highly qualified and will be able to show you examples of their work before they start. Full details on the work of a maxillofacial prosthetist can be found at www.impt.co.uk

At your 1st appointment:

At your first consultation we will check this option is right for you. We will explain the procedure. We will ask you to agree to the treatment. It is your choice if you choose to go have this treatment or not.

If you agree to go ahead, your next appointment will be for a mould. This is to record the size and shape of your nipple area.

At your 2nd appointment:

You can wear any clothing to your appointment. Please wear a bra with no lace or detail over the nipple area. For example, wear a sports bra. This will let the prosthetist take an exact impression.

The prosthetist will take a shade of your existing nipple (if you have one) against colour silicone to get the best match.

If both nipples need replacing, we may take a mould of each nipple before your surgery. If you have already had your surgery your prosthetist will talk about the size and shape with you. They can make the prostheses using stock moulds.

Follow-up appointments:

Once your nipple prosthesis is ready, you will have an appointment to check the fit. We will go over how to wear, care and maintain it.

After you have been fitted with your new nipple prosthesis, you may be asked to return to clinic to review the fit and how you are managing with it. You can use this time to ask any more questions you may have.

If everything is fine, we will give you contact details and review appointments to check the quality of the prosthesis. Review appointments are often every 18 to 24 months.

Fitting your nipple prosthesis

During your 1st appointment we will talk about the options for holding the prosthesis in place. There are 2 options:

1. Water based glue (adhesive):

You will use a medical glue to hold the prosthesis in place:

1. Wash and dry your hands before touching the prosthesis. Your prosthesis must also be clean and dry.
2. Apply a thin amount of glue to the fitting surface of the nipple. You can use a cotton bud if needed. At first the glue will be white. It will turn clear after a couple of minutes.
3. Once clear, gently press the nipple into place.
4. You can also add some edge adhesive or Vaseline on the fine edges to blend the nipple into the skin. You must be careful not to apply too much glue as this will spill over the edges and spoil the look.
5. Place the nipple into position using a mirror and view from the front and side.
6. The position may change if you will be wearing a bra.

Medical glue are available from your prosthetist.

2. Creating a vacuum:

Sometimes you can create a small vacuum to keep the nipple in place:

1. Apply a small amount of water or Vaseline around the edge of the prosthesis. Then pinch the nipple before putting it in place.
2. Keep the nipple pinched and smooth the edges of the nipple in place.
3. After releasing the nipple it should have created a vacuum which holds it in place. If it has not, repeat the process.

Removing your prosthesis

To remove the prosthesis, lift the edge using a cotton bud. Slowly work your way around and under the fitting surface, lifting away from the skin as you go.

When can I wear my prosthesis?

We will let you know when it is best for you to wear the nipple. You can usually put it on in the morning and wear it for the day.

Do not sleep in your nipple. This gives your skin a chance to breathe.

Cleaning your nipple

You must clean your nipple everyday. If you do not keep it clean, germs can grow within the silicone. This will make it smell, change colour and reduce the quality of the material.

- Carefully clean your nipple with mild soap and water using a soft toothbrush or cloth.
- Take extra care at the fine edges as they may tear.
- Rinse clean and pat dry with a tissue or towel.

Can I wear my nipple prosthesis when swimming?

Wearing a swimming costume that is close-fitting and tight will help to keep the nipple in place. Rigorous swimming may cause the nipple to slip inside your costume/ swim wear.

Your prosthesis is made from silicone. You may find that the chemicals in swimming pools have a bleaching effect over time on the silicone. If you go swimming you will need to rinse the prosthesis in clean water as soon as possible once you are out of the pool.

Where should I keep my prosthesis when I am not wearing it?

When you are not wearing it, store it away from direct sunlight in a container with a lid. Make sure the container is completely dry. Some people use an old make-up compact or a small plastic box with a lid.

How long will my prosthesis last?

The nipple will last between 12 to 18 months. If it gets damaged or wears out sooner, please call the maxillofacial department. They will arrange to see the prosthetist for a review.

A prosthesis can last for different amounts of time. Your prosthetist will be able to tell you when they think you need a new one. We will replace it for you when needed.

What should I look out for?

Stop wearing your nipple if you notice any:

- redness,
- soreness,
- itching,

due to the use of the prosthesis or adhesive, and contact the Prosthesis Clinic for a review.

What should I do if I have a problem?

If you have any problems with your prosthesis, please contact the service on the phone numbers below for help and advice (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm):

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery: 0116 258 5671

Maxillofacial Laboratory/ Prosthesis Clinic: **0116 258 5255**



Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice

Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.

To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો.

If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net

We are a research hospital and you may be asked to take part in research