

Areola Tattooing

What it is?

On your breast, the colored area around your nipple is called the **areola**. Your nipple and the areola are normally removed in a total mastectomy. The last step in a breast reconstruction is to make a new nipple and areola. These steps are most often done in the Plastic Surgery Office treatment room, but may be done during surgery if other procedures are needed at the same time.

The following information will tell you what you can expect and how you can prepare for areola tattooing.

How is it done?

Areola tattooing is done after your nipple has healed, about 1 to 2 months after you nipple reconstruction. You do not need to wear any special clothing for this procedure.

A new areola is made by tattooing. The medical name for tattooing is **micropigmentation (my-krow-pig-men-ta-shun)**. The plastic surgeon will try to match the color and shape of your natural areola as closely as possible.

The surgeon will inject numbing medicine into your skin around the nipple. After the area is numb, your nurse will use a special machine to make the tattoo. A sterile needle, held by the tattoo machine makes several injections of the dye into your skin to create the areola. It usually takes under an hour to apply the pigment and complete the process.

You will have a bandage taped to the tattooed area after your procedure.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.