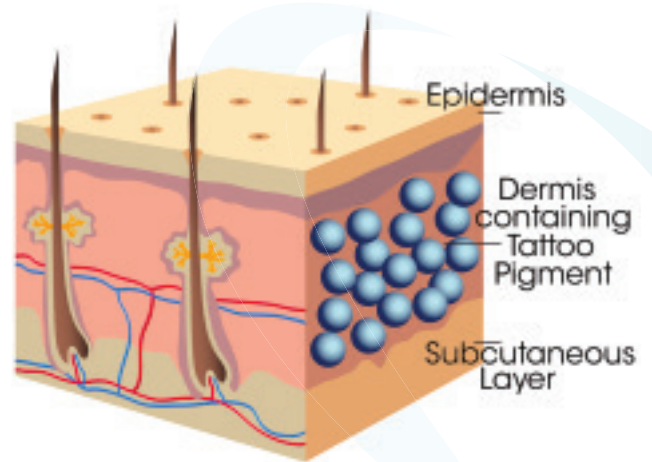


What is a Tattoo?

A tattoo is a semi-permanent implant of colour particles (“pigment”) into the skin. This is placed in the dermis, which is a deep skin layer that does not shed.

When the pigment is placed in this layer, the body is very slow to clear it which is why tattoos last for a very long time. They can fade over time as the cells clear away the pigment. This is why the colour or brightness changes, needing occasional retouches.



What Does OHIP Cover?

- ✓ Single session per nipple after cancer
- ✓ Nipple tattoo provided under a medical doctor
- ✗ 3D tattoo requiring multiple sessions
- ✗ Nipple tattoo from a tattoo or micropigmentation artist (not a medical doctor)

What is in the Pigment?

Most pigments contain metal oxides which is a combination of metal and oxygen. Iron oxide and Titanium dioxide are some examples of metal oxide pigments. If you had radiotherapy, often you have already had small tattoo dots using metal oxide pigments. There are also other ingredients which are approved for use. However, if you have allergies to any substances, you may react to the ink. Please inform your doctor so the ingredients can be checked.

Tattoo Safety

Tattoo pigments are safest when approved by local drug inspection agencies. Ingredient information is available upon request. Metal oxide pigments have the longest history of use. Organic pigments are occasionally used but have less predictable side-effects. For safety, please review the following with your doctor:

- Skin sensitivities
- Allergies
- Frequent MRIs

What to Expect on the Day of the Tattoo

The tattoo takes approximately 30-45 minutes. Here are the steps.

1. TATTOO DESIGN

On the day of the tattoo, the new nipple-areolar complex will be designed to match the breast. If you only need one side tattooed, the other nipple is used to help match the position and shape of the new nipple. You will then be asked to look in a mirror to see if you like the shape.

2. LOCAL ANESTHETIC

Next, some local anesthetic ("freezing") will be placed in the skin. This takes away the pain and also slows bleeding.

3. TESTING

The colour is mixed and placed on the skin. This patch is also used to test for skin reactions.

4. TATTOO

You will feel a light buzzing as a small brush needle is used to colour the skin.

5. DRESSING

A light dressing will be placed over top with a waterproof tape. You will be given written wound care instructions.

Recovery

1-2 days. The skin will heal in 1-2 weeks. Avoid dirty environments until the tattoo has healed (1-2 weeks).

Schedule your personal consultation with Dr. Lee to talk about nipple-areolar tattooing.