

PARAMEDICAL AREOLA TATTOOING FAQ's

What does it cost?

The price for nipple tattoos provided by an experienced tattoo artist is typically about \$350 for one nipple and **\$600 to \$800 for two nipples** if you're paying out of pocket.

Are There Any Consultations Involved?

Prior to the actual tattooing part, you should first do consultations. Both the artist and the patient have to agree on the position and size of your nipple. It is best to try and match the nipple on the other breast as much as possible. Once you have agreed on the size and position, then we need to choose and mix various shades of pigment in order to achieve that hyper-realistic image of your 3D tattoo nipple and areola.

How to Prepare for Nipple and Areola Micropigmentation?

We guide you through the whole procedure during the consultations you have done prior to the treatment. However, these are some basic steps you could expect:

- You should take a shower before the treatment,
- Do not apply any lotions, creams or anything else on your skin, especially on your breast,
- Wear some support (a bra or a tight camisole) to hold the bandages in place,
- You might be given a robe to change into,
- A consent form and a health questionnaire will most likely be given to you to fill in.

What to Expect During the Procedure?

The artist will create a design made to match the nipple on the other breast, if there is a nipple there. If not, the tattoo artist could use some of your old photos to try to recreate the natural look of your nipples and areolas. You will discuss the exact position, size and once you approve, lay back, relax and let the artist create his/her artistry.

Once you have completed the procedure, the artist will apply some petroleum jelly, i.e. Vaseline and place a bandage over your new mastectomy nipple tattoo.

How Long Does the Nipple and Areola Micropigmentation Take?

It depends on the condition of your reconstructed breast, mostly on scarring and thickness of the skin. The whole procedure takes *between one and three hours*, depending whether you are having one or both breasts done.

The nipple and areola tattooing process itself normally does not take more than 30 minutes per breast. Most clients require one initial treatment followed by another appointment to build up the pigment color.

Does a Nipple Tattoo Hurt?

Mastectomy usually leads to breast numbness, since mastectomy causes nerve damage that reduces sensation in the breast. How much a nipple and areola tattooing process hurts varies from person to person, but be aware that your reconstructed breast is no longer as sensitive as it used to be. Thus, *in most cases the pain level is quite low.*

You might experience some tingling and discomfort, but a numbing cream or a topical local anesthetic could be applied 45-60 minutes prior to the treatment. Patients with implants might feel a vibration through the implant during the procedure.

What Does the Aftercare Involve?

Healing usually lasts *up to 10 days*. The following could be expected after the treatment:

- Some temporary swelling and/or redness for the first day or two.
- Scabbing or flaking may occur on the tattooed area. This is a normal part of the healing process, but it is important not to pick at it since you may remove the pigment and cause infection.
- Keep the tattooed area clean.
- Use clean paper or gauze after showering or bathing to pat the area dry.
- You might be asked to apply antibacterial ointment a few times a day for a couple of days.
- Do not go swimming, sunbathing or to a sauna and Jacuzzi for at least two weeks following the treatment.
- You might be given a follow-up appointment for the second treatment where additional pigment is applied, if necessary.

How Soon Can I Expect My Nipple Tattoo to Fade?

Be aware that some products, such as those containing *aloe vera*, *Retin A* or *glycolic acid*, could lead to the tattoo fading more quickly.

This is nothing to be scared of, just to draw your attention to the fact you might need more frequent touch-ups in case your nipple and areola tattoo fades more quickly. However, in most cases nipple and areola tattoos last for years, especially with proper care.

When Should I Get a Touch Up?

Due to the fact the pigment is less concentrated than the traditional tattoo ink, the body metabolizes it more quickly and it fades over time. *It will take years, though, before you*

need a touch-up. However, this depends on your skin condition and tone, as well. Some fair skinned women may require a touch-up every year.

How Long Will the Tattoo Last?

Some of the most realistic results are achieved with 3D nipple tattoos, which are in fact real tattoos using oscillating needles coated with pigment. A tattoo artist uses a range of colors and one session is usually enough. An image of a 3D nipple is created and although it has no physical dimension, it looks amazingly real. *A realistic looking nipple has the positive effect of improving body image and increasing your self-esteem.*

What Side Effects Are to Be Expected?

Micropigmentation carries some risks, including infection, allergic reactions, granulomas and keloid formations. Some people may experience allergic reactions to the tattoo pigment.

Signs could be:

- Fever
- Muscle aches
- Prolonged and severe redness
- Pain and swelling in the nipple area (certain degree of redness and swelling for a day or two is normal)

However, there is no evidence that getting a tattoo poses a health risk or increases the risk of cancer (re)occurrence. You should wait for a couple of months after your breast reconstructive surgery before getting your nipple and areola tattoo. It is especially important to delay tattoos after radiation. If you would like to be as safe as possible, consult your doctor before undergoing the 3D nipple tattoo treatment.

Additionally, you might think about doing a skin-patch test that involves applying a small amount of pigment with a needle to a small area. The test is done 48 hours before the treatment.