Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center

PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Instructions for After Your Nipple and Areola Tattoo Procedure

This information explains how to care for yourself after your nipple and areola (the circle around your nipple) tattoo procedure.

1 to 3 Days After Your Procedure

- Your physician assistant will place Tegaderm™ plastic dressing on your tattoo right after your procedure. Leave this dressing on for 3 days.
- You may shower normally with your dressing on. It’s waterproof.
- Fluid may build up underneath your dressing. This is normal.
- If your dressing starts to come off or if fluid is dripping from your dressing, put another Tegaderm™ dressing over the one you have on.

4 Days After Your Procedure

- Remove the Tegaderm™ dressing. Gently clean the area in the shower with warm water and your normal shower soap. Don’t rub the area to get it clean.
- Leave any scabs that may have formed alone. They will heal and come off on their own.
- After your shower, dry the area gently. Apply non-scented white lotion (such as Lubriderm®, Aveeno®, or Eucerin®) to the tattooed area until it absorbs.

5 to 14 Days After Your Procedure

- Continue applying non-scented white lotion to the area at least once a day.
- You may apply lotion more than once a day if the area looks dry.

General Care Guidelines

- Don’t soak in a pool, bath, or hot tub until your tattoo is completely healed. This usually takes about 2 weeks.
- If a crust or scab appears on the area, don’t peel it off. This can pull away the ink on your tattoo.
- Don’t exercise (such as run, do yoga, or cycle) for 1 week after your procedure or while there’s scabbing.

If you’re in physical therapy, it’s okay to continue after your procedure.

- Don’t lift anything heavier than 20 pounds (9 kilograms) for 1 week after your procedure or while there’s scabbing.
- You can wear a bra at any time.

When to Call Your Healthcare Provider

Call your healthcare provider if you have:

- A fever of 101° F (38.3° C) or higher
- Pain at or around the treated area
- Increasing redness or warmth at or around the treated area
- Thick drainage at or around the treated area

If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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