



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 tattoo procedure. Your areola is the circle around your nipple.

1 to 3 days after your procedure

- Your physician assistant or nurse practitioner will place a Tegaderm™ plastic dressing on your tattoo right after your procedure. Leave this dressing on for 3 days.
- You can shower as usual 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

- Take off the Tegaderm dressing. Gently clean the tattooed area in the shower with warm water and your normal shower soap. Do not rub the area to get it clean.
- If a crust or scab forms on the tattooed area, leave it alone. It will heal and come off on its own.
- After your shower, dry the tattooed area gently. Put non-scented white lotion or cream on the area until it absorbs (soaks in). Examples of non-scented white lotions and creams are Lubriderm®, Aveeno®, CeraVe®, and Eucerin®.

5 to 14 days after your procedure

- Keep putting non-scented white lotion or cream on the tattooed area at least once a day.
- You can put lotion or cream on the area more than once a day if it looks dry.

General care guidelines

- Do not go swimming or soak in a pool, bath, or hot tub until your tattoo has fully healed. This usually takes about 2 weeks.
- If a crust or scab forms on the tattooed area, do not peel it off. This can pull away the ink on your tattoo.
- Do not exercise (such as running, doing yoga, or cycling) for 1 week after your procedure or while there's scabbing. If you're in physical therapy, it's OK to keep going after your procedure.
- Do not 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 tattooed area.
- Redness or warmth at or around the tattooed area that's getting worse.
- Thick drainage at or around the tattooed area.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your healthcare provider. A member of your care team will answer Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside those hours, you can leave a message or talk with another MSK provider. There is always a doctor or nurse on call. If you're not sure how to reach your healthcare provider, call 212-639-2000.

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

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