

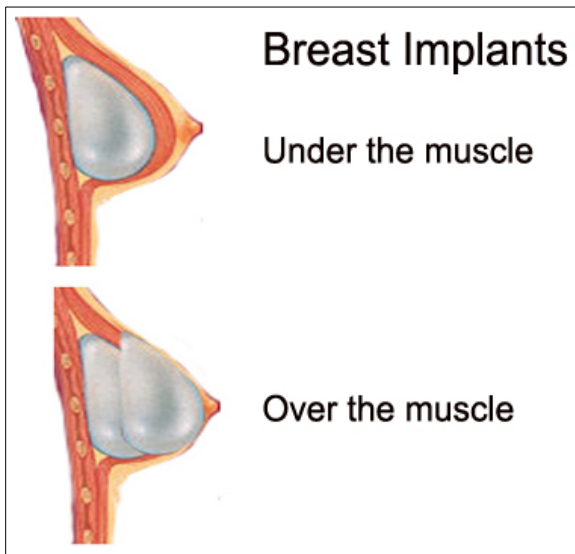
Areola Repigmentation – When is it a good idea?

By: Susan Church CPCP

Areola Repigmentation is one of the easiest procedures to perform. Many technicians feel it is more simple than performing a full lip colour application. Lip procedures can be challenging with blue undertones, uneven pigmentation whether hypo or hyper pigmentation, client's pain threshold, herpetic outbreaks, lip tissue that may be spongy and excessive bleeding are some of the complications of a full lip colour application. Areola repigmentation, whether it is just inserting pigment around the white rings around the areola to conceal a light scar or rebuilding a complete areola and nipple colouration, we feel it is less problematic than performing a full lip colour application.

Cancer patients need to be in the right frame of mind when going through the areola repigmentation process. They will feel better about themselves when they can look in a mirror with confidence and see a breast that looks somewhat normal.

Breast Implants



We usually wait at least 6 months to create a permanent areola. You can however, (as long as the skin is healed around the areola) create a semi-permanent one while the breast tissue is healing and the relaxation process is taking place. Just make sure to ask if the implant is under or over the muscle.

If the implant is 'OVER' the muscle you can puncture the implant if you place the needle too deep into the dermis. Sometimes the skin is so thin it seems that if you just touch the skin with your fingers it will burst!

We like to let the patient draw on what size areola they would like, then we discuss exactly what they are looking for. Some women request really large areolas while others prefer very small. We tell them that this will probably be the only time in their life that they are able to have their "DREAM" areolas. This always puts a smile on their face!!

Tissue to rebuild the nipple can be grafted from the labia, the inside of the thigh, or the back of the ear. Nipple restoration takes place usually a few months after the breast reconstruction. The initial swelling from the surgery is now minimal and the breast tissue has now become more natural looking as the skin's elasticity has lessened a bit.

Many women choose not to have a nipple reconstructed. They prefer to just have an areola tattooed on with different colouring for the nipple.

I personally think that this is an interesting alternative to having invasive surgery to create a nipple. Patients can purchase 'semi-erect' nipples made of rubber. They stick on the breast tissue like a suction cup. If you watched this episode of 'Sex in the City'... Charlotte gives Miranda a pair of rubber stick on nipples. She puts on her fake nipples and walks through a bar. Heads turn to look at her erect nipples as she created quite a stir with her new look.

Insurance for Patients

Insurance companies are now required by law (as of October 21, 1998) to pay for part or all of the costs incurred for a breast reconstruction. This law is the '1998 Federal Breast Reconstruction Law'.

To read information on this law look up SEC. 901. SHORT TITLE, The "Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998" (WHCRA). This law is designed to provide insurance coverage to breast cancer patients whose health care plans are not required by state law to cover the costs of breast reconstruction.

Every state has different laws pertaining to insurance. To learn about insurance coverage for Breast Reconstruction laws in your state, check out these two sites:

<http://breastcenter.com/support/insurancestatelaw> or
<http://www.plasticsurgery.org/advocacy/brstlaws>

FYI

To help protect us from cancer, the following 10 fruits and vegetables have superb cancer-fighting properties: Alfalfa Sprouts, Blueberries, Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, Kale, Oranges, Prunes, Raisins, Spinach and Strawberries.

Need for These Services

With all of the breast cancer patients now having the option for Areola Repigmentation, this advancing field is growing faster than any of the other tattooing fields. You can work in concert with physicians or in your own studio or clinic. One of the most rewarding feelings you can have is when you help a patient feel whole again. Remember that men as well as women have the need for these services.

Areola Repigmentation Class Information

An instructional class on 'Areola Repigmentation' should consist of an 8-hour day. The class should focus on types of surgery the cancer patient goes through, types of reconstruction, proper methods of nipple and areola application, colour selection including techniques in tri-dimensional nipple and areola colour, appropriate needle selection, insurance billing codes and how to work with physicians.

To get more information on our Areola Repigmentation class or our 'Absolute Perfection' Pigment Colours call Susan Church at 949.548.6447 or visit www.susanchurch.com