## Breast Cancer Awareness



THE COSMETIC TATTOO, OR PARAMEDICAL TATTOO, IS BEING USED AS PART OF THE BREAST RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS

o one wants to hear the word cancer – but unfortunately it is here, and it is real. There are different types of cancer that affect men and women, breast cancer being at the top of the list for women. The statistics in the U.S. show that 1 in 8 women (about 12%) will develop breast cancer over the course of the lifetime.

The emotional impact of being diagnosed with breast cancer leaves women with a sense of depression, panic, and feeling of loss, changing their lives forever. Depending on the type of cancer, some women are required to have breast reconstruction after mastectomy. Breast reconstruction brings a positive effect on their lives, improving a woman's appearance, self-confidence, and overall quality of life. There are several available techniques, including skin expansion followed by the use of implants or reconstruction with tissue from

## AREOLA NIPPLE MICROPIGMENTATION (PARAMEDICAL TATTOO)

An option in the breast reconstruction process

other parts of their body. The plastic surgeon makes recommendations based on age, health, type of cancer, body anatomy, skin quality, breast size, and patient expectations.

Following breast reconstruction is the creation of the nipple, done with different techniques. One technique is the star flap, or skate flap, that is made from small cuts in the breast mound. The other is the pedicle technique, where a small stint is inserted to create the extension. This has no color. Some patients prefer not to have this kind of surgery, and feel comfortable without having a nipple. In these cases they can choose to have a nipple tattoo.

Permanent cosmetics, or cosmetic tattoos, are not only used to enhance eyebrows, eyeliners, or lips. The cosmetic tattoo, or paramedical tattoo, is being used as part of the breast reconstruction process. With the use of basic artistic techniques and appropriate skin tone, shape, size, position and color, a tattoo technician can create the illusion of natural nipple areola complex. It is very important to understand that this is an advanced procedure, and the technician must have experience, knowledge, high level of skill, and artistic ability. Technicians are working with scar tissue, and in order to create a three-dimensional look, must use several colors and shades combined with different techniques and different needle configurations to give

a natural, real look.

After going through a tough battle with cancer, including surgeries and chemotherapy treatments, the areola nipple tattoo is a great



option to bring back your selfesteem, and look and feel like a woman again.

To learn more about the Federal Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998, as well as individual state guidelines for breast reconstruction insurance coverage, you can visit http://www.breastreconstruction.org/breast\_reconstruction.org/breast\_reconstruction.insurance\_coverage.html.

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