

MASTECTOMY TATTOOS

Breast cancer can affect the body in profound ways physically, complicates relationships, and leaves permanent, uninvited marks. We think that covering these scars with a different kind of mark—a tattoo—can not only help mastectomy patients reclaim their bodies, but also turn something painful into something beautiful.

Welcome to Personal Ink (P.ink)

WHY?

Women consider getting a mastectomy tattoo for a variety of reasons, they:

- ✿ Help them to feel more confident after breast cancer treatment.
- ✿ Mark what they have been through and create something personal.
- ✿ Cover or disguise a scar.

WHEN CAN YOU GET THEM?

Doctors recommend 3 years. Before getting a tattoo your operation sites need to be completely healed and you should be finished any chemotherapy or radiotherapy treatment.

Before consulting with an artist, it's important to check with your doctor to make sure you're able to get the tattoo.

Breast cancer sucks. There are 2.6 million breast cancer survivors in the US. 56% of which are left with mastectomy scars and often, no nipples.

Mastectomy tattoos are an artistic tattoo that is drawn on top of the breast area to cover these scars. Often, women who get implants but did not get nipple reconstruction or do not get implants choose to get these tattoos.



"Sometimes putting a tattoo in that spot can help you to move forward" - Colby Butler

DO THEY HURT?

Tattoos aren't exactly pain free, even if you've gone through the pain of a mastectomy, it's a different kind of pain. Your artist should walk you through what to expect and different options on how to cope with and lessen the pain.

THE RISKS:

Tattoo reactions are not common, but they do occur and they're difficult to treat.

They often develop in response to red dye (a common allergen), so if that's the color you're wanting to use, make sure to talk to your dermatologist first about any concerns.

If you've previously had allergic reactions to hair dye, costume jewelry, or cheap fragrances, you might have a higher risk of developing an infection, so, again, talk to your doctor.

OTHER RISKS TO KEEP IN MIND:

- ✿ It could be covering potential skin cancer (moles)
- ✿ It could affect how you sweat
- ✿ Could increase risk of bacterial infection
- ✿ It could cause complications during medical procedures ie. MRI



CAN YOU SCAR?

Oh the irony, here's the thing, scar tissue may form when you get a tattoo, or you could develop granulomas which are small knots or bumps that may form around material that the body perceives as foreign.

If you tend to get keloids—scars that grow beyond normal boundaries—you may develop the same kind of reaction to the tattoo.

IS THE INK DANGEROUS?

While there is no direct connection between tattoos and cancer, there are some ingredients in tattoo ink that may be linked to it.

Black ink can be dangerous because it contains a very high level of benzo(a)pyrene and white ink has Titanium Dioxide and has been known to increase a person's risk of getting cancer.

If you're concerned, talk to your artist and find out what kind of ink they use and then talk to your doctor.

MAKE SURE TO TELL YOUR ARTIST ANY MEDICATIONS YOU ARE ON. INCLUDING ACNE MEDICATIONS, ANTI-REJECTION DRUGS, BLOOD THINNERS & ANTIBIOTICS.

REMINDER:

If you're considering a mastectomy tattoo, talk to your doctor before talking to an artist to make sure it's the right option for you based on your medical history.

