

Saline tattoo lightening / removal (Li-FT®)

What is saline removal?

Saline removal is a tattooing procedure, where a solution called Li-FT®, is tattooed into the skin to draw out pigment. The aim is to lighten or remove tattoo ink. Li-FT® is used at The Royal Marsden to remove or lighten radiotherapy tattoos or unwanted areola tattoos.

Patients should not be referred for the removal of cosmetic tattoos. This procedure is only carried out by a nurse specialised in tattooing and Li-FT® removal.

On the day of the appointment

- You will have an allocated clinic slot and the procedure should take no more than one hour
- On arrival we will consent you for the procedure
- The nurse will apply anaesthetic cream to the area – this will need to stay on for 20 minutes
- The nurse will then use a tattoo machine to make tiny holes in the surface of the skin; this allows the Li-FT® solution to penetrate the epidermis and dermis (the top two layers of skin)
- Once 3-5 passes have been made, (tattooing the same area) you will need to lay for 10 minutes with a Li-FT® soak on the area.

Will there be bleeding?

Yes, bleeding during removal is normal and helpful in drawing out old pigment. It usually stops prior to you leaving the appointment. You should not feel discomfort, as numbing cream has been applied prior to starting.

Will I need more than one session?

You may require between 1–5 sessions to remove the pigment. These are always spaced 8 weeks apart.

What ingredients are in Li-FT®?

Lemon seed extract and orange seed extract

Both lemon seed extract and orange seed extract are effective in fading and exfoliation.

Aloe barbadensis leaf juice

Aloe barbadensis has anti-inflammatory properties. It soothes the skin and is effective for healing wounds.



Calendula extract

Calendula has antifungal, anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties that aid in wound healing. This also helps to soothe the skin.

Sterile water

Li-FT® only uses sterile water in its formulation for optimum safety.

Sodium Benzoate

This is a widely used preservative with anti-fungal agents, effective against bacteria.

Potassium Sorbate

Another widely used preservative, effective against the growth of mould, yeast, and some bacteria.

Should you have an allergy to any of the above ingredients, please inform the plastics team and cancel your appointment.

What happens afterwards?

Before leaving, we will book you a follow up appointment for 8 weeks' time. Li-FT® treatments are only licensed for 8 weeks or more, so sessions cannot be organised sooner. We will encourage you to get back to normal activities and you may require pain relief for the first 48 hours.

Aftercare following saline removal

- Keep the site clean and open to the air
- Do not cover with a plaster unless advised to by the plastic surgery nurse who performed the removal
- Clean the area four times a day with saline using clean hands and a cotton bud
- Shower as normal, but do not soak for more than 5 minutes. Dry with a clean towel. Do not rub the site, as this can disturb the scab we want to form.
- Avoid bathing, swimming, saunas, hot tubs or tanning whilst healing
- Try not to pick the scab and let the scab drop off naturally
- Once the scab is removed, apply vitamin A cream once daily
- The treated area should usually be fully healed in 2–4 weeks.

Contact details

If you need further information, have concerns or you would like to book an appointment, please call:

Sutton Plastic Surgery Nurse

020 8642 6011 ext 4345

