

# PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

## SKIN CAMOUFLAGE



### WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THIS LEAFLET?

This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about skin camouflage – what products are available how they can help you and where you can find more information on them.

### WHAT IS SKIN CAMOUFLAGE?

Skin camouflage is best described as a specialised technique that uses highly pigmented (containing a lot of colour) products to closely match your skin colour while effectively concealing scars, marks, port wine stains and other forms of discolouration.

These products significantly differ from ordinary makeup. They are designed to provide long-lasting coverage and are often water resistant. This allows activities, such as swimming, without fear of it washing off.

To ensure they stay in place and have a natural finish, camouflage products are typically set using a fixing powder or spray. However, they should not be considered totally “rub-proof”; and some transfer onto clothing, furnishings, and bed linen, may occur. In most cases this can be removed by standard household cleaning products.

The skin camouflage should be removed daily using soap and water or a soap substitute (cleansing cream), or an oil-based skin cleanser.

Avoid aggressive scrubbing as this can irritate the skin.

A daily routine of removal will allow you to look at the skin for any changes to the condition. It also means you can apply medication, sun protection, and emollients

(moisturisers) to your skin before reapplying your skin camouflage.

### WHAT SKIN CONDITIONS ARE SUITABLE FOR CAMOUFLAGE USE?

Skin camouflage is **not** suitable for

- Skin cancers
- Bacterial infections (such as impetigo)
- Fungal infections (such as ringworm)
- Viral infections (such as cold sores)
- Undiagnosed skin conditions.

Non-contagious skin conditions such as vitiligo, birthmarks, and healed scars are suitable for skin camouflage. However, the skin must **not** be infected, inflamed, blistered, or broken. Skin camouflage can also be used over radiotherapy marks and tattoos.

Whilst camouflage products can change the visual skin colour, the texture and structure will not be altered, such as levelling out scars, filling in indented scars or altering the skin’s surface.

### ARE CAMOUFLAGE PRODUCTS SUITABLE FOR EVERYONE?

Skin camouflage products are suitable for all adults, regardless of their age, gender, or ethnicity. They are not usually recommended for babies or children (typically over age 5), unless suggested by their health care provider.

### HOW IS SKIN CAMOUFLAGE APPLIED?

Always apply to clean, dry skin. The easiest is to use clean fingertips to dab a small amount of cream on the area and then wipe it over the whole affected area.



A soft brush can help apply skin camouflage to narrow areas of discoloured skin, such as telangiectasia (small thread like veins) and stretch marks.

A cosmetic sponge may be used for larger areas. Following this apply some setting powder to the area using a powder puff. However, some powders will make the area matt.

A light application of the specialist fixier spray will return the area to a natural glow.

Usually, one camouflage layer is sufficient over the affected skin area; however, if needed, a second layer can be applied.

Thoroughly clean any brushes and sponges after use.

## HOW DO I KNOW WHAT COLOUR AND PRODUCT TO USE?

There is a vast range of pre-mixed skin camouflage colours available, but if necessary, these can be mixed together to match your skin colour.

Some brands are better suited to humidity; some are denser or opaque or are longer lasting on the skin than others.

A more liquid consistency is preferable for larger areas requiring camouflage.

There are specialist-trained professionals who can help you with choosing the right colour for your skin. They can also show you how to apply it.

Skin camouflage advisers often work within the NHS (usually in the outpatient clinic). They also work in specialist units such as Plastic Surgery or Dermatology departments. They also work in the private sector, such as private hospital clinics or high street aesthetic therapy salons.

## HOW DO I OBTAIN SKIN CAMOUFLAGE PRODUCTS?

At the time of printing this leaflet, some skin camouflage creams and powders are available on NHS prescription. Access to

camouflage products may be restricted or denied, due to your local Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) policy. Your health care provider or Pharmacist will advise what is available.

The brand name, colour code and size required (as agreed with you during the skin camouflage consultation) will need to be provided to your health care provider for an NHS prescription.

Skin camouflage products can be purchased without a prescription by ordering them from a pharmacist, or direct from specialists by telephone or online.

Supermarkets, chemists and department stores sell concealer products and mineral powders. These may be helpful for minor discolouration but may not be as effective as genuine camouflage products.

### CAUTION:

This leaflet mentions 'emollients' (moisturisers). Emollients, creams, lotions and ointments contain oils. When emollient products get in contact with dressings, clothing, bed linen or hair, there is a danger that they could catch fire more easily. There is still a risk if the emollient products have dried. People using skincare or haircare products should be very careful near naked flames or lit cigarettes. Wash clothing daily and bedlinen frequently, if they are in contact with emollients. This may not remove the risk completely, even at high temperatures. Caution is still needed. More information may be obtained at:

[www.gov.uk/guidance/safe-use-of-emollient-skin-creams-to-treat-dry-skin-conditions](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/safe-use-of-emollient-skin-creams-to-treat-dry-skin-conditions).

[www.nfcc.org.uk/our-services/campaigns/know-the-fire-risk/](http://www.nfcc.org.uk/our-services/campaigns/know-the-fire-risk/)

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT SKIN CAMOUFLAGE?

Your local pharmacy, medical or therapy clinic should have details on skin



camouflage and your nearest adviser. Patient Support groups may also have such information on their website.

This leaflet aims to provide accurate information about the subject and is a consensus of the views held by representatives of the British Association of Dermatologists: individual patient circumstances may differ, which might alter both the advice and course of therapy given to you by your doctor.

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*This leaflet has been assessed for readability by the British Association of Dermatologists' Patient Information Lay Review Panel*

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**BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF  
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