



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, what can be achieved with them and where you can find out more about them.

What is skin camouflage?

Skin camouflage is best described as a highly pigmented ointment, which is set with a powder, and mimics the colour of your skin. When correctly applied the products are very long lasting and are considered waterproof, which allows you to swim, shower, etc., without the fear that it would wash off. Despite manufacturers' claims no product is fully waterproof+so there will be minor transfer and soiling of clothes, furnishings and bed linen.

The camouflage is removed daily by cleansing the skin with a soap substitute or soap and water.

What skin conditions are suitable for camouflage use?

Non-contagious skin conditions, for example vitiligo and port wine stains, are suitable for skin camouflage provided the area is not blistered or open and the skin, including scarring, needs to be totally healed and sealed. Radiography markings can also be hidden with camouflage, as can decorative tattoos.

Skin conditions can make the affected area appear more pale, red, or darker than the unaffected skin. Skin camouflage will mask this discoloration but obviously the structure of the skin condition will not be altered.

Skin camouflage is not suitable for undiagnosed patches and rashes, bacterial infections (such as impetigo), fungal infections (such as ringworm) viral infections (such as cold sores) and skin cancers.

How is the camouflage applied?

Most people prefer to apply the camouflage ointment with their clean fingertips, gently rubbing the product onto the area. A brush is the better tool for applying camouflage over hairline scarring and narrow bands of discoloration, such as stretch marks. The area is then set with loose powder applied by a powder puff.

A little product will cover a large area of skin. Usually one layer is sufficient to conceal the discoloration, however if necessary a second layer can be applied.

How do I know what colour and product to use?

There is a vast range of pre-mixed skin tones available and if required two colours can be mixed together to create an acceptable skin match. Some brands are better suited to humidity; some give denser coverage or considered to be longer lasting on the skin than others. One brand is more liquid than the other three, making it ideal for larger areas requiring camouflage.

It would be difficult to make a choice without professional assistance, as you would need to obtain the products to trial; a contact list of useful organisation is listed below.

There are specially trained professionals who can advise you on both an acceptable colour for your skin and application techniques. Skin camouflage consultants work within the NHS (usually in the outpatient clinic) and in specialist wards, such as a Burns Unit. Practitioners also work in the private sector, such as a private hospital, clinic or a high street beauty salon.

How do I obtain skin camouflage products?

Currently there are four brands available (Veil[®], Covermark[®], Dermacolor[®] and Keromask[®]) at doctor's discretion, on NHS prescription. These four brands can also be purchased over the Internet and by mail and telephone order. They can also be ordered for cash sale at the prescription counter in your local chemist.

Also available in chemists, supermarkets and department stores are concealer products and mineral powders, which may be helpful in camouflaging minor discoloration but do not have the same durability-stability properties as true camouflage creams.

Where can I get more information about skin camouflage?

British Association of Skin Camouflage (NHS and private practice)
www.skin-camouflage.net

British Red Cross Camouflage Service (NHS only)
www.redcross.uk

Skin Camouflage Network (NHS and private practice)
www.skincamouflagenetwork.org.uk

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: its contents, however, may occasionally differ from the advice given to you by your doctor.

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

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