

- The disposable plastic cartridges or adapters must be discarded into the garbage immediately after use.

Aftercare Tips:

- Ask about the follow-up care needed with your type of piercing. Your piercer should provide you with verbal and written instructions on how to clean and care for your piercing to help prevent an infection.
- Always wash your hands before cleaning your piercing or the surrounding area.
- Avoid touching your piercing, except to clean, it until it has healed. Piercings may take from several weeks to months to completely heal and may be at a greater risk of infection if irritated by clothing or if the site is not kept clean and dry during the healing period. If your piercing becomes infected it can result in permanent scarring or disfigurement.



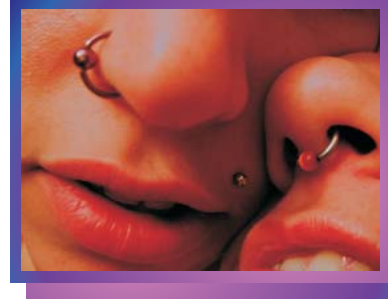
See your doctor immediately...

If the pierced area becomes infected (i.e. increased redness, swelling, tenderness and/or the appearance of pus). Removal of jewellery is generally not recommended because the hole can close up around the infected tissue. This can reduce access to the site, preventing necessary care.



Play it Safe! Don't get pierced if...

- A piercer can't or won't answer all of your questions.
- A piercer does not use pre-packaged, sterile, single-use disposable needles.
- A piercer does not use proper cleaning and sterilizing methods in their studio.
- The piercer appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Alcohol and drugs may impair their judgement and coordination and you'll pay the price for any mistakes they make!
- You have taken drugs or alcohol. Alcohol or drugs may thin your blood and this may lead to excessive bleeding.



**HEALTH
DEPARTMENT**

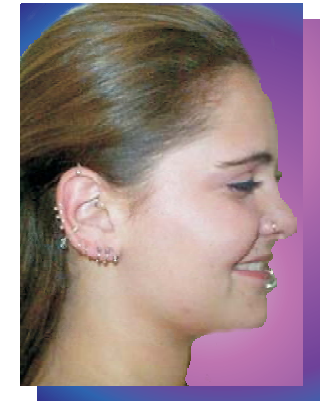
For more information
visit our Web site at
www.region.durham.on.ca
Keyword: Beauty & Body Art Safety
or call the Environmental Help Line at
1-888-777-9613 ext. 2188

DUHEV-347
Nov. 07

Beauty and Body Art Safety

Make Sure It's Safe!

Body & Ear Piercing



If you want the work done,
get it done right.
It's your body and your health

Be a smart consumer!

The practice of body piercing has been around for centuries and the basic methods haven't changed much over time. What has changed is the risk of getting blood-borne diseases such as Hepatitis or HIV/AIDS. Anytime you pierce the skin with a needle, there is a chance of infection or an allergic reaction. Be a smart consumer - get it done with the least amount of risk involved.

Shopping Tips for Safe Piercings:



- Do your homework! Check out different studios and ask to see examples of the piercers' work. Make sure the piercer can answer all of your questions.
- Always use a professional piercer who operates out of a public shop or studio. Home-based piercing is not recommended because these premises are not likely to have been inspected by the local Health Department.
- Ask if the piercing studio has been inspected by the local Health Department. Call the Environmental Help Line for information on the studio's most recent inspection report.
- Look for a work area that is clean and well organized.

- Look for a sink with hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Before the piercer gets started, watch to see that he/she washes his/her hands with liquid soap and water, and puts on a new pair of single-use disposable gloves.
- Tell the piercer if you have any allergies to certain metals, latex, iodine (antiseptics) etc. before they start the piercing procedure.
- Make sure the body area to be pierced is first cleaned with soap and water, then wiped with an appropriate skin antiseptic (eg. 70% rubbing alcohol). Oral piercings require an appropriate oral rinse.
- Pierce only fleshy skin areas. Areas with a large amount of veins and arteries or nerves (i.e. the neck, joints, tendons etc.) should not be pierced. These areas are at a greater risk of excessive bleeding, nerve damage or loss of movement.

Never agree to share a needle!

- Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS can be passed on by improperly sterilized or re-used, contaminated needles. Used needles can also develop burrs, hooks and rust which can tear skin and result in infections.
- The piercer must use a new, sterile, single-use disposable needle for each piercing.

- All sterilized piercing instruments (i.e. needles, clamps, etc.) and jewellery must be stored in sealed, sterile packaging and you should see the piercer open the package(s) right in front of you before he/she gets started.
- Sterile jewellery inserted into new piercings must be made of high quality, non-allergenic materials such as gold, surgical steel, niobium, titanium or PTFE nylon. The jewellery design should be appropriate for the type of piercing being done.
- Used needles must be discarded into an approved, plastic SHARPS disposal container immediately after use.



You do not have to see blood or body fluids on needles or equipment for an infection to occur. Make sure the piercer you choose has made infection control a priority!

All reusable equipment that is used to pierce the skin, or that may be contaminated by blood or body fluids during use, (i.e. clamps, pliers, etc.) must be cleaned and then sterilized before each use. Otherwise, contaminated blood or body fluids from a previous client may remain on the equipment.

What to look for:

- Either a sink or an ultrasonic cleaner must be available for cleaning of re-usable instruments prior to

- An approved sterilizer (i.e. autoclave or dry-heat sterilizer) must be present. Boiling, ultraviolet (UV) light or hot bead processes are not approved means of sterilization because they will not kill all germs.

Ear Piercing:



- Ear piercing guns must be used only on the ear lobes! An ear piercer should not use an ear piercing gun to pierce any part of the body other than the fleshy lobe of the ear. The earring (i.e. stud) can cause damage to the ear cartilage or tissue in other body areas during the procedure.
- All approved ear guns are equipped with sterile, single-use, disposable, plastic cartridges or adapters, protecting the gun from being contaminated by blood or body fluids during use.



- The earrings and disposable cartridge or adapters must be stored in sealed sterile packages. The sterile packages should be opened in front of you and the earrings loaded onto the gun before getting started.