

Do Your Homework - Safety Tips for Beauty and Body Art Procedures

Tattooing, Body and Ear piercing is a practice that has been around for centuries and the basic methods for these procedures have not changed much over the years. What has changed is the risk of contracting hepatitis and HIV/AIDS through infected blood. These diseases may be passed from one person to another if dirty contaminated instruments are used.

It is important to do your homework when you're considering having these procedures done. We recommend using only artists that can prove they have been inspected by the Health Unit. Work areas should be clean and well organized. The person performing the work should always wash their hands with warm water and soap and wear disposable gloves.

Tips for Safe Tattooing:

The artist must use new, sterile or single use disposable needles for each tattoo. All needles must be discarded into a sharps container.

Tips for Body Piercing:

- The body area that is to be pierced must be cleaned with a skin antiseptic (e.g. 70% isopropyl alcohol). Oral piercing requires an oral rinse.
- Pierce only fleshy skin areas. Areas with a large amount of veins and arteries or nerves should not be pierced.
- New, sterile, or single-use disposable needles must be used for each piercing. Never agree to share needles.
- All approved ear piercing devices are equipped with sterile, single-use, disposable, plastic cartridges or adapters, protecting the gun from being contaminated by blood or body fluids during use.
- All disposable cartridges must be stored in sealed packages and must be discarded into the garbage after use.

With all invasive procedures follow-up care must be provided by the tattoo artist or piercer. The tattoo artist or piercer should provide you with verbal and written instruction on how to clean and care for your tattoo or piercing to help prevent infection. Always avoid touching the area that was pierced or tattooed except to clean the area until it is fully healed. If the tattoo or piercing becomes infected (increased redness, swelling, tenderness and/or the appearance of pus) you should seek medical attention immediately.

**For more information,
visit the Health Unit website at: www.healthunit.org
Or call the Health ACTION Line
at 1-800-660-5853 or 613-345-5685**

