

SUGGESTED AFTERCARE FOR BODY PIERCINGS

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CONGRADULATIONS! You have just received a body piercing by a trained professional who cleaned and disinfected the area pierced and used sterile needles, piercing instruments, and jewelry. **HOW YOUR PIERCING HEALS IS UP TO YOU.** This sheet will help guide you to the appropriate care of your new piercing.

WARNING: Chemicals **WILL NOT** make you heal faster! Quite the opposite in fact, chemicals of any kind will upset the balance within your newly forming cells and create a condition in which your piercing will heal tremendously slow, if ever. Therefore, **DO NOT USE** any product marked for “external use only” including, but not limited to: Proven, rubbing alcohol, Hydrogen Peroxide, Bactine and Ear Care Solutions, benzethonium chloride, Antibacterial soaps, such as Dial, Soft Soap, etc., Neosporin or any other petroleum-based ointment such as betadine or Hibiclens.

REMEMBER IF YOU CAN'T PUT IT IN EYES DON'T PUT IT IN YOUR PIERCING!

PRODUCTS YOU CAN USE

SALINE SOLUTION: Saline is the key to quick healing! It's PH balanced to our bodies. The easiest and most accurate way to acquire saline is in the form of saline solution for contact lenses, preferably the sterile type in a pressurized can. **DO NOT** use multi-purpose solutions or wetting/soaking solutions, they contain an enzyme and are not the same as saline solution.

NON-IODIZED SEA SALT: Non-iodized sea salt will always state on the package “this salt does not contain iodine, a necessary nutrient.” Check the label before you purchase. **DO NOT USE** table salt or Epson salt.

Q-TIPS: Very handy to have around especially when you have a piercing (such as a nostril) where getting at the inside may be difficult.

HOW TO CLEAN YOUR PIERCING

ALWAYS WASH YOUR HANDS BEFORE TOUCHING YOUR PIERCING!

Mix ¼ teaspoon sea salt with 8oz. hot water. Arrange this solution so that you can soak the piercing. For instance, bend over a cup and place it tightly over your navel or nipple and straighten up or lay back, use cotton balls, gauze, or clean washcloth for hard to get to piercings. Leave the hot salt-water solution there until it goes cold then rinse with saline solution. Gently clean any lymph (crusties) away from the piercing, do this several times a day until your piercing is healed. **DO NOT** move the jewelry back and forth through piercing – it does more harm than good. It's like picking a scab, the body has to

start the healing process all over again. Your jewelry will move naturally with your daily activities. Some people have had good luck cleaning the outside of their piercing and ring in the shower with a very diluted (just barely holds bubbles) high quality glycerin or castile based soap. What ever soap you use in the shower make sure you rinse your piercing off with saline solution when you're done.

INFECTED PIERCINGS

More often than not, people who think they have an infection actually have an irritation and adjusting the method care will fix the problem. Remember that your piercing is going to secrete lymph through out the healing process. Lymph can be thick and bright yellow to whitish to clear in color. You can recognize a true infection by its sudden inflammation and accompanying discharge of green pus and/or blood (sometimes a fever). If you suspect an infection, contact your Body Piercer or your doctor at once, DO NOT wait for it to get worse and DO NOT attempt a home remedy.

SOME TIPS WE HAVE LEARNED OVER THE YEARS

All piercings: Avoid playing with new piercings as physical irritation is the worst. Leave them alone to heal. When clothing is to be in contact, or over the piercing, stay with clean loose, breathable (cotton) clothes.

Navel: Physical irritation is the most common navel piercing problem. You must wear your pants or skirts below your navel or it may never heal.

Nipples: Many women report that wearing a bra after a nipple piercing helps with soreness. Especially for the first few days, larger breasted women may be more likely to find this true. Wearing a sports bra to bed may also help.

Swimming: Chlorine sucks. It is tremendously drying and irritating on new piercings and should be avoided if possible. If you can't avoid swimming, then do your best to clean the piercing with saline whenever you swim. Avoid hot tubs until the piercing is healed. Lakes and oceans are topic of debate, but a couple things are certain. Sewage is frequently dumped into the water systems, and swimming in sewage is a bad idea. Tropical waters can carry staph infections. On the other hand, some people report that their piercing healed instantly after swimming in the ocean. Learn to identify the condition of your piercing and keep it out of irritating situations.

Keloids and scar tissue: Ninety-five percent of the time people mistake irritation for scarring. If you suspect you are developing scar tissue, your piercer or plastic surgeon is the best place to start.

Miscellaneous Tips: We don't know how long it will take for your piercing to heal in a short time-you will be a judge of that. Expect new piercings to be sore and red for a month-if there isn't an improvement after that time, contact your Piercer to help you determine a route to speed healing. Continue to clean your piercing once a day for as long as you have it. "Expert" advice: Don't listen to your friend, your mom, or your psychic advisor. We have been doing this far longer than they have.

HEALING

Tongue piercing usually takes between 10 to 14 days to fully heal. You should brush your teeth at least twice a day and use alcohol free mouthwash after meals or three times a day (morning, noon, and night). If you use Listerine/Scope or mouthwash with alcohol in it, dilute ½ the amount with water. Don't put anything dirty in your mouth, such as fingers, pens, etc. and you **MUST** refrain from oral sex and French kissing for the first 10 to 14 days, even in a monogamous relationship. Don't play with the jewelry or chew on it during the healing process, as this can lead to excessive scar tissue formation and delay healing. Avoid spicy food and alcohol during the healing period, as it may increase swelling. Also be careful with temperature hot food and drinks.

It is almost impossible to develop an infection with a tongue piercing because the mouth contains the enzyme "ptyalin" and lingual antimicrobial peptide (lap) which kills bacteria. Over use of mouthwash destroys these, which may cause your tongue to turn green or brown. If this happens reduce the amount of mouthwash you use. You will experience swelling the first day you get the piercing, but the worst swelling will be from 2 to 5 days after the piercing, during which time your tongue will be very uncoordinated. You may find it hard to speak and eat. During this time of swelling you can take an anti-inflammatory or aspirin to help with the pain and swelling. Ice cold water or ice chips will also help with swelling and will feel good. The only food you may be able to eat are soft foods or broths, be careful with solid foods. Start with small bites and chew slowly, because you do not want to bite down on your barbell and break a tooth. During the healing process you may experience one or more of the following, so **DON'T BE ALARMED!** They will stop once the piercing is healed. You may wake up with a sore throat; this is from sleeping with your mouth open, due to swelling. Your salivary glands will overproduce saliva and this cause you to constantly swallow, this may last up to 5 days during which the salivary glands (under your chin) can become swollen. The taste buds on the end of your tongue may become tender and you may experience a tingling or burning sensation. You may experience tenderness where the balls on the barbell make a depression on the palate of your mouth and on the lower inside gum of your mouth. You may see a white fluid being excreted by the wound, leaving a white pus ring around the barbell, don't be alarmed it is just dead white blood cells. It's a normal part of the healing process, all wounds heal by secreting plasma which forms a scab, but because of the saliva in the mouth the scab won't become the dry scaly type of scab that we are accustomed to seeing.

CHANGING JEWELRY

After 3 to 5 days the swelling will start to reduce, and between 7 to 10 days after the piercing you need to change to a shorter barbell, you can change it yourself or we can do it for you. You need to keep jewelry in your piercing at all times, as the hole will close up very quickly and it is painful to reinsert the jewelry once this happens even after the piercing is healed, it may close up within a day if you remove the jewelry.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.