

Safe Body Art

TATTOOS AND BODY PIERCING

creating healthy communities
together

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You have the right to expect clean, safe services when having body piercing or tattoos. Anytime the skin is pierced or tattooed, bacteria and viruses can easily enter the body. You can get HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B and C and many other serious infections. You do not have to see blood or body fluids on needles, equipment or surfaces to get an infection.

Make sure it's safe!

Make sure the business has made hygiene and sterilization or disinfection of equipment a high priority.

What to look for and ask:

- Always go to a professional tattoo or piercer who operates out of a public shop or studio. Make sure you go to a business that has been inspected by a Public Health Inspector. Ask to see the most recent inspection report or call the Huron County Health Unit.
- Home piercing and tattoos are not recommended because they are not likely to be inspected by Public Health staff. You shouldn't visit "underground" studios or get home piercings by your friends either.
- Look for a work area that is clean, well lit and well organized.
- The business must have a sink with liquid soap and paper towels to wash and dry hands.
- The worker must wash their hands before they touch you and must use a new pair of disposable gloves for each piercing or tattoo.
- Ask how the body artist cleans and sterilizes the tattoo and piercing equipment. If he/she hesitates or does not answer you, you may want to take your business somewhere else.
- Prior to being pierced with a needle, your skin must first be cleaned to kill any germs that may be on your skin.
- Watch the worker remove the sterile needles from the package. The sterile needles should be used immediately after being removed from the package. They should not be placed on any surface before use. For tattooing, watch that the needle bar, needles, tube and grip are removed from packaging right before use.
- Needles and needle bars must be pre-packaged and sterile and should only be used once then thrown out in a special container.
- The sterile needles should be used immediately after being removed from the package. They should not be placed on any surface before use.
- A tattoo or body piercing studio must have a working sterilizer to sterilize equipment. Ask to see the most recent spore test result for the sterilizer. A passing spore test will indicate that the machine is working properly to destroy harmful germs.
- You have the right to ask the worker to explain how they clean and disinfect their equipment before the service begins.
- If you have any concerns, contact the Huron County Health Unit.

Read on ►

Don't get a tattoo or piercing if....

- ▶ An artist won't answer all of your questions
- ▶ The artist is smoking or appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- ▶ You have taken drugs or alcohol. Alcohol or drugs may thin your blood, leading to excessive bleeding and impair your judgement.

Safe healing checklist

- ▶ Wash your hands before touching the tattoo or piercing.
- ▶ Make sure that your new tattoo is covered with a clean bandage.
- ▶ You should get verbal and written instructions on how to prevent the tattoo or piercing from getting infected.
- ▶ Many infections are caused by poor care of the tattoo by the client. It is important to follow the instructions given to you by the worker.
- ▶ See a doctor if your tattoo or piercing is red, sore, swollen, tender or there is pus coming from it. You may have an infection.

What if you already have an amateur tattoo or piercing?

A professional can help answer questions that you may have. If you think there is a chance that you may have been exposed to HIV, hepatitis B or hepatitis C, testing can be done by a health care provider or by contacting the Huron County Health Unit. Vaccination against Hepatitis B is also available.

If you have any doubts, LEAVE. Your body and health may be at risk!