

Skin Penetration - Fact Sheet

"BODY PIERCING"

Introduction:

Body piercing can be carried out on a number of locations around the body. This fact sheet relates to all body piercings except ear and nose. Body piercers must have adequate knowledge on how and where to pierce. They must also have adequate knowledge on infection control techniques, and minimum hygiene standards. The following recommendations will help to achieve these standards.

Premises:

- All skin penetration premises must be registered with the local council. The register is to be made available for public viewing
- The premises must be in a clean and hygienic condition at all times
- A hand basin with hot and cold running water is required in the premises and is recommended to be in the treatment area
- Soap or other hand cleaning substance is required to be at the hand basin.
- Paper towel or other single use hand drying equipment is required to be at the hand basin
- The construction of the premises should meet with local council requirements
- The finish on all surfaces within the piercing area should be made of materials that are easily cleaned
- Fittings in the piercing area such as benches should be cleaned between each client and/ or a clean covering placed over the treatment surface
- Adequate lighting is recommended

Personal Hygiene:

- Body piercers must wash their hands before and after attending a client
- A clean gown or apron must be worn during a body piercing procedure
- If a body piercer has a cut or open wound on their hands or fingers especially, they must cover it with a waterproof dressing
- When carrying out a piercing, single use gloves must be worn

Equipment:

- All equipment must be cleaned between uses
- Equipment that is used to penetrate the skin must be sterilised before it is used and maintained in a sterile clean condition
- It is recommended to use single use equipment wherever possible
- All single use equipment should be disposed immediately after use
- Details of the sterilisation of equipment must be recorded
- All body piercings are to be carried out with a sterile needle
- Specific ear and nose piercing guns are available for use on the **ear and nose only** under no circumstance should a gun be used for any other body piercing

Procedures:

- Although not a legal requirement a person under the age of 18 years should not receive a body piercing unless parental or guardian approval is provided
- Body piercers should have adequate knowledge on how and where to pierce. First aid knowledge is also recommended
- All necessary equipment should be set up just prior to the piercing
- The skin to be pierced should be cleaned with a skin antiseptic
- All equipment that penetrates the skin must be sterilised
- Sterile packaging should only be opened when ready to perform piercing
- Only sterile jewellery is to be inserted into the opening. Some jewellery can not be sterilised, check compatibility
- Contact with sterile equipment should not occur unless sterile gloves are worn. Single use gloves are not sterile unless specified

After Treatment:

- Single use gloves should be disposed of immediately after the procedure
- All equipment should be cleaned after a procedure
- Single use equipment must be disposed of after use
- Single use sharps must be disposed of into a sharps container
- Re-useable sharps must be sterilised before reuse
- Details of the sterilisation process must be recorded
- All waste should be bagged appropriately and disposed daily. It is illegal for sharps or other clinical waste to be disposed of in the general waste stream
- After care instruction should be provided to the client on cleaning the site and jewellery, infections and what to look for, and healing times
- There should be no exchange of jewellery once inserted into an opening

For further information, or for other publications about skin penetration, contact your local council or public health unit.

For details on the legislative requirements for skin penetration procedures and best practice techniques refer to the 'Guidelines for Skin Penetration - 2001' and the 'Skin Penetration Code of Best Practice' respectively.

These publications are available from your local council, Public Health Units, the Better Health Centre on 9816 0452 or the NSW Health web site www.health.nsw.gov.au

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