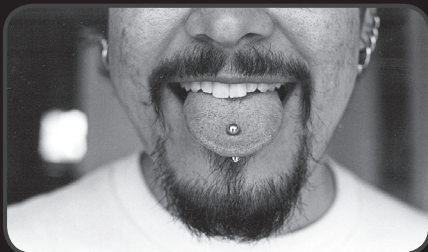


Safe Piercing and Tattooing What You Need to Know

Any time you pierce or tattoo skin, it is easy for bacteria and viruses to enter the body. For example, you can get HIV/AIDS, hepatitis B or C, or many other serious infections. Even if you cannot see blood or body fluids on needles, equipment or surfaces, you can get an infection.

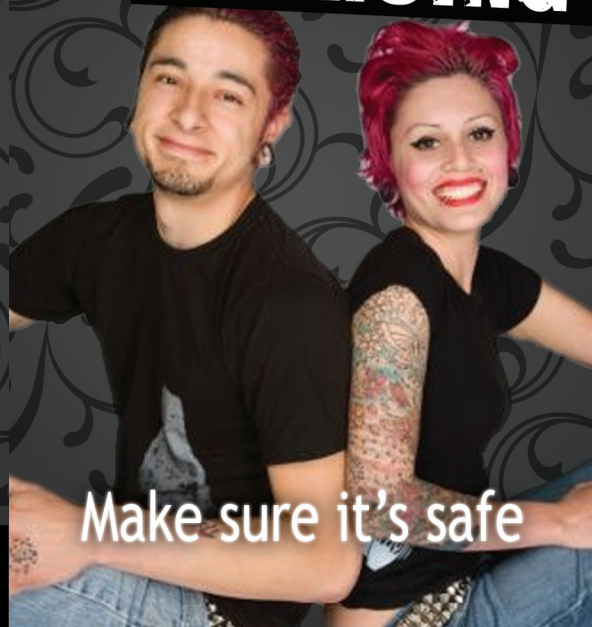
When you get body piercings or tattoos, you have the right to clean, safe service. This pamphlet will help you find out if the studio you choose takes infection prevention seriously.



SAFE HEALING

- Cover your new tattoo with a clean bandage.
- Wash your hands before touching the tattoo or piercing.
- The studio should tell you how to prevent infections as well as give you written instructions to prevent your new tattoo or piercing from getting infected.
- Follow the aftercare instructions they give you. You can get an infection if you don't.
- You may have an infection if your tattoo or piercing is:
 - Red
 - Swollen
 - Has **pus** coming out
 - Tender
 - Sore
- If you have any of these symptoms, see a doctor.

TATTOOING PIERCING



Make sure it's safe

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Public Health

BEFORE YOU GO

- Home piercing and tattoos are not recommended because they are not likely to be inspected by public health. You shouldn't visit "underground" studios for the same reason.
- The risk of infection is a serious problem in jail where the rate of hepatitis C and HIV are much higher than for people outside the jail.
- It is important to be straight and sober before you go to a studio for piercing or tattooing.



WHAT TO LOOK FOR AND ASK

- Make sure the studio you choose has been inspected by public health. Ask to see the most recent inspection report or call your local health unit.
- The studio must be clean and well lit.
- Ask how the body artist cleans and sterilizes their tattoo and piercing equipment. If they hesitate or do not answer you, you may want to take your business somewhere else.
- The body artist should not be smoking, drinking or taking drugs while working on you.
- The studio must have a sink with liquid soap and paper towels for proper hand washing. The artist must wash their hands before they touch you. They must use a new pair of disposable gloves for each piercing or tattoo.
- They must clean your skin with antiseptic (e.g., alcohol) before piercing or tattooing.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR AND ASK (CONT)

- It's a good idea to watch the body artist remove the sterile needles from the package. For tattooing, watch them remove the sterile bar and needles from the packaging.
- Needles must be pre-packed and sterile. They can only be used once. After one use, they have to be thrown away in a special container.
- A tattoo or body piercing studio must have a working autoclave. This is a sterilizer that uses steam to destroy harmful germs on their equipment. Ask to see the most recent spore test result for the autoclave. A "passing" spore test means that the machine is working properly.
- If you have any doubts, LEAVE. Your body and health are at risk.
- If you have any concerns or wish to file a complaint, contact your local health unit.