

GENERAL BODY PIERCING AFTERCARE INSTRUCTIONS and ESTIMATED HEALING TIMES

Provide to the client and legal guardian (if client is under 18 years of age).

You've just received a body piercing by a trained body piercing licensee. Now it is up to you to take appropriate care of your piercing during the critical healing period.

PIERCING AFTERCARE

DO NOT use ANY product marked "For External Use Only" including, but not limited to, rubbing alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, lidocaine (e.g. Bactine), triple antibiotic ointment (e.g. Neosporin), antiseptic (e.g. Betadine/Hibiclens etc.).

Use products that *will not* irritate the piercing and will facilitate fast healing, such as:

- **A mild, fragrance-free liquid soap, preferably antimicrobial or germicidal.**
- **Packaged sterile saline solution with NO additives, or a non-iodized sea salt mixture:** Dissolve 1/8-1/4 teaspoon of non-iodized (iodine-free) sea salt into one cup (8 ounces) of warm distilled or bottled water. A stronger mixture is not better; a saline solution that is too strong can irritate your piercing.

CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS

Wash your hands before cleaning your piercing! Use the cleaning solution(s) recommended for your piercing for the *entire* healing time. Do this even if the piercing looks or feels healed sooner.

- **Do not move the piercing jewelry when the site is crusty; it does more harm to the piercing site than good.**
- **Do not play with the new piercing, physical irritation is the worst!**
- **When clothing is in contact with the piercing, make sure it is clean, loose and breathable.**

Healing Time Estimations

EARLOBES: Usually heal in 4-8 weeks; use saline twice daily, sea salt soaks as desired for comfort.

EAR CARTILAGE: Usually heals in 6 months; use saline twice daily, as cartilage is prone to developing cysts. Be sure to rinse jewelry and ear after shampooing to remove residue. Clean ear after using styling products. Cartilage piercings are tender to sleep on, avoid sleeping on your new piercing as irritation will extend the healing time.

NOSTRIL-NOSE: Usually heals in 10-12 weeks (septum, 4 weeks); use saline twice daily inside and out with a saline saturated q-tip.

EYEBROW: Usually heals in 8-10 weeks; use saline twice daily.

TONGUE: Usually heals in about 4 weeks; use alcohol-free antiseptic mouthwash 2-4 times daily. Substitute saline as needed; saline can be used as often as desired. You will have swelling for about a week. Rest your tongue. Do not stick it out past your teeth for the first week. Eat small frequent meals and frozen fruit bars. Advil, Aleve and Motrin will help swelling but may also cause bleeding so don't overdo it. *Drinking alcohol in any quantity will significantly increase swelling* during the first week or two. Drink plenty of water. Brush teeth gently at first; do not brush the tongue during healing. Expect to see some lymph drainage coming from the piercing site. No kissing (or any oral contact) until healed. Check to be sure the barbell balls are screwed on tight and be sure to 'downsize' after healing.

LABRETS-LIPS-BEAUTY MARKS: Usually heals in 8+ weeks; use saline twice daily, inside and out. Remember that intra-oral healing appears white. If a stud was used, expect the disc to embed slightly into the lip over time, but do not allow new skin to form over the disc. If this begins, see your piercer immediately for a jewelry change. Downsize post length on stud (if used) after two weeks.

NAVEL: Usually heals in 6-9 months; use saline twice daily. Expect some redness at the edges for up to a couple of months. A hard, vented eye patch can be applied under tight clothing or secured by using an elastic bandage around the body. This can protect the area from restrictive clothing, excess irritation, and impact during physical activities such as contact sports. Pants or skirt lines should be worn below your navel or it can be irritated so badly that it will not heal.

NIPPLES: Usually heals in 4-6 months; use saline twice daily. *No oral contact until fully healed.* This piercing can produce "crusties" for a year or more. During the first few days, many women report that wearing a bra helps with soreness. A sports bra is helpful at night. Men usually find a tighter fitting cotton tank top is helpful as well.

SPECIALTY LEVEL ONE MALE GENITAL: Healing time may be 6-8 weeks for the foreskin or penis, to 3-4 months or longer for the frenum and perineum. Your piercer should provide you aftercare instructions specific to your piercing. The genital surface piercings are all susceptible to infection due to the closed-in nature of the genital area of the body and limited air circulation. Because of the constant irritation from clothing and general movement, these piercings may take longer to heal. The jewelry inserted into the penis may limit the effectiveness of condoms by causing tears. Imprecise piercing may damage nerves and blood vessels located in the penis. Infection or allergic reaction may extend time required for healing. Neglecting appropriate aftercare may increase likelihood of infection and extend healing time.

SPECIALTY LEVEL ONE FEMALE GENITAL: Healing time may be 4-8 weeks for a piercing of the clitoral hood, 6-8 weeks for the frenulum labiorum and labia minor, to 3-4 months or longer for the labia major. Your piercer should provide you aftercare instructions specific to your piercing. The genital surface piercings are all susceptible to infection due to the closed-in nature of the genital area of the body and limited air circulation. Because of the constant irritation from clothing and general movement, these piercings may take longer to heal. Imprecise piercing may damage nerves and blood vessels located in the genitals. Infection and allergic reaction may extend time required for healing. Neglecting appropriate aftercare may increase likelihood of infection and extend healing time.

SPECIALTY LEVEL TWO MALE GENITAL: Healing time may be 3-4 months for the corona of the glans, 4-6 months for a piercing through the urethra that exits through upper surface of the glans penis, and 6-9 months for a vertical or horizontal piercing of the head or glans of the penis. Your piercer should provide you aftercare instructions specific to your piercing. The genital piercings are all susceptible to infection due to the closed-in nature of the genital area of the body and limited air circulation. Because of the constant irritation from clothing and general movement, these piercings may take longer to heal. The jewelry inserted into the penis may limit the effectiveness of condoms by causing tears. Imprecise piercing of the glans may damage nerves and blood vessels located in the penis. Infection or allergic reaction may extend time required for healing. Neglecting appropriate aftercare may increase likelihood of infection and extend healing time.

SPECIALTY LEVEL TWO FEMALE GENITAL: Healing time may be 4-8 weeks for a piercing of the clitoris, 3-4 months or longer for a piercing behind the clitoral shaft, and a piercing through the urethra. Your piercer should provide you aftercare instructions specific to your piercing. The genital piercings are all susceptible to infection due to the closed-in nature of the genital area of the body and limited air circulation. Because of the constant irritation from clothing and general movement, these piercings may take longer to heal. Imprecise piercing may damage nerves and blood vessels located in the genitals. Imprecise piercing the clitoris or behind the clitoral shaft may result in significant irreparable nerve damage. Infection and allergic reaction may extend time required for healing. Neglecting appropriate aftercare may increase likelihood of infection and extend healing time.

Additional Information and Advise for ALL Piercings

Swimming: Chlorine can over-dry a new piercing. It is best to avoid soaking in pools and hot tubs. Stay away from rivers and lakes while healing; they are full of bacteria. In cases of accidental exposure, clean your piercing immediately afterward.

Keloids/Scars/Cysts: Some piercings are prone to developing keloids or scars, or cysts. A cyst is a fluid-filled bump very close to the piercing. Usually they are tender; do not attempt to pop a suspected cyst. Regular sea salt soaks encourages drainage. Should a cyst occur and sea salts soaks offer no relief, contact your physician.



If you have any questions or comments during the healing of your piercing, please contact your licensed piercer at: _____.
(Daytime Phone Number)

Comments or complaints; contact: Health Licensing Office, Regulatory Division
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