

**Table 5: Detailed infection Prevention and Control Procedures for Body Piercing**

Adapted from *Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Personal Services: Tattooing, Ear/Body piercing, and Electrolysis*. Health Canada, July 1999.

		Equipment / Supplies	Use During Skin Piercing	Procedures for Infection Prevention
1.	Client preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Single use towel</li> </ul>	A towel may be used to drape the piercing site.	The towel should be used to protect the client from any soiling during the procedure. The towel must be laundered after each client.
2.	Skin preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Skin antiseptic, e.g. 70% alcohol or an iodine, such as betadine. The antiseptic selected should be appropriate for the piercing site according to the manufacturer's instructions, e.g. 70% alcohol is suitable for application to skin but should not be used on mucous membranes.</li> <li>➤ Clean swabs, e.g. gauze or cotton balls</li> <li>➤ Antibacterial mouthwash</li> </ul>	<p>Swabs moistened with an antiseptic are used to disinfect the skin piercing sites. Warm water is used to cleanse areas around the eyes.</p> <p>Mouthwash is used as an antiseptic before piercing the tongue.</p>	<p>The skin antiseptic should be applied with a moist swab, using a circular motion. If alcohol is used it should be stored in a pump pack which is used to moisten the swab with alcohol. Other antiseptics, e.g. betadine, may be poured into a disposable cup. If betadine is used to prepare the skin before genital piercing, any excess antiseptic should be removed to avoid irritation to mucous membranes.</p> <p>Antibacterial mouthwash cleans the mouth prior to tongue piercing if used for several minutes.</p>

3.	Skin marking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Calipers</li>   <li>➤ Tooth picks and ink, e.g. gentian violet</li>   <li>➤ Forceps/elastic bands</li> </ul>	<p>Calipers are used to measure skin piercing sites to create a symmetrical appearance.</p> <p>Toothpicks, dipped in ink mark the piercing site(s).</p> <p>Forceps should be used to hold the marked skin taut for the needle piercing. They may become contaminated with blood during the procedure. Elastic bands are used to hold the handles of the forceps closed to ensure secure gripping of the skin surface.</p>	<p>Calipers shall be cleaned then disinfected with a low-level disinfectant if the skin is intact. Calipers used on mucous membranes shall be high-level disinfected.</p> <p>A few drops of ink should be placed on a clean surface e.g. the inner surface of the wrapper used for a sterilized item, to avoid dipping the toothpick into the ink container itself. The site/s to be pierced must first be cleaned with an approved skin antiseptic, then marked with a (iodine) felt tip pen to mark all body sites prior to piercing. After one minute, once the pen mark has dried, the site/s are to be cleaned again with the approved skin antiseptic just prior to piercing.</p> <p>Forceps must be cleaned and sterilized after use on each client. Clean elastic bands should be stored in a covered container and discarded after use. Forceps should be used to remove the elastics from the container at the outset of the procedure to avoid contamination of other elastic bands in the container.</p>
4.	Service Tray	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A tray that is smooth, nonporous and easy to clean e.g. metal</li> </ul>	<p>The tray is covered with a clean towel. Sterile instruments and other supplies, e.g. lubricant, cork elastic bands, and any additional required items should be place on the towel. The sterile needle, jewellery, and forceps should be left in the opened packages until just before use. The tip of the needle must not be touched prior to insertion.</p>	<p>The tray must be cleaned then wiped with a low-level disinfectant after use. The towel shall be a single use disposable or freshly laundered cloth.</p>

5.	Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Single use hollow skin piercing needles, e.g. stainless steel needle pushers (plastic)</li>   <li>➤ Insertion tapers connectors (solid metal) receiving tubers corks (single-use)</li> </ul>	<p>The needle pierces the skin/tissue and the jewellery is inserted in the channel created by the needle. The practitioner may use needle pushers to push the blunt end of the needle through tissue.</p> <p>Insertion tapers are most often used to up gauge of put in a thicker piece of jewellery into already healed piercing. Connectors are used to facilitate the insertion of internally threaded barbells by providing a link between the hollow needle and the hollow jewellery. Receiving tubes are used when piercing is in difficult to reach areas, such as nostril or glands of the penis. The tube forms a drum of skin into which the piercing needle is received. Corks are used to cover the sharp end of the needle after it has pierced through tissue to prevent a needlestick injury to the practitioner.</p>	<p>One new, sterilized piercing needle should be used for each client <b>and</b> each procedure. The needle/s must be discarded into the sharps container after use. Because the needle is hollow it cannot be properly cleaned or sterilized, therefore must be discarded. Needle pushers should undergo sterilization because of contact with the sterile needle that will be inserted through skin/tissue.</p> <p>Insertion tapers are to be cleaned and sterilized after use on each client. Specialized connectors are to be cleaned with small brushes in a solution of detergent and water and sterilized after use on each client. Closed ended receiving tubes must be sterile, single-use and disposable. Open ended receiving tubes can be cleaned with a wire brush and sterilized between use. Clean, single-use corks are to be discarded after one piercing. It is not necessary to sterilize the cork prior to use as it does not come in contact with open skin areas. The needle tip, which is inserted into the cork, should not be pulled back through the freshly pierced tissue. Instead the cork and needle shall be placed in the sharps container.</p>
6.	Jewellery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rings, studs and barbells are common forms. The composition of jewellery is primarily 14-18 carat gold, titanium, niobium or stainless steel (some steel contains nickel)</li> <li>➤ Ring opening pliers / ring closing pliers</li> </ul>	<p>Sterile jewellery is inserted through the needle channel and secured.</p> <p>Sterile ring pliers are to be used to open and close jewellery taking care not to scratch or nick the metal.</p>	<p>Jewellery must be sterilized before use. Jewellery should be smooth to avoid skin irritation, which delays healing and increases infection risk.</p> <p>Pliers are to be cleaned and sterilized after each use.</p>
7.	Additional supplies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Container e.g. metal, with lid</li> <li>➤ Cool water and detergent</li> <li>➤ Sharps container with secure lid</li> </ul>	<p>The container is used to store used instruments prior to cleaning.</p> <p>Soaking instruments prevents drying of body proteins.</p> <p>For the disposal of piercing needles and cork.</p>	<p>The container shall be cleaned and then to low-level disinfected daily.</p> <p>The solution in the container shall be changed daily.</p> <p>Approved sharps containers must be used to help prevent sharps injuries.</p>

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8.	Client aftercare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Soap</li>   <li>➤ Antibacterial ointment</li> </ul>	<p>Clients should be instructed to wash their hands before washing the pierced area with soap on a daily basis and to rotate the jewellery to help with the cleaning process.</p> <p>Ointment may be applied to the freshly pierced skin area and the jewellery should be rotated.</p>	<p>The skin piercing site must be cleaned to promote healing and reduce the change of infection. Oral and written instructions for aftercare are to be provided to the client.</p> <p>If ointment is used, single-use ointment applications are recommended. Ointment also acts as a lubricant and may reduce the chance of infection. If ointment is taken from a bulk container it is to be removed with a single-use spatula or tongue depressor. Some people develop an allergic reaction to the ointment, and so some practitioners do not use it.</p>
9.	Practitioner supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hand washing soap</li>   <li>➤ Alcohol-based hand rubs</li>   <li>➤ Hand lotion</li>   <li>➤ Clean medical gloves, e.g. latex, vinyl, neoprene, or nitrile</li> </ul>	<p>Soap is used to clean the practitioner's hands of microorganisms.</p> <p>Alcohol-based hand rubs containing between 60-90% alcohol can be used to perform hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled.</p> <p>Lotions are used to keep the skin in good condition as frequent hand washing may dry out the skin.</p> <p>Gloves shall be used as a protective barrier on hands after cleaning of the skin with an antiseptic and opening the package that contains the sterile needle. Gloves or forceps are to be used to remove the needle from the package. If the gloves are contaminated, they shall be removed, hand hygiene performed, and a new pair put on.</p>	<p>Refer to recommendations in section 6 of the main document.</p> <p>Gloves shall be worn to reduce the number of organisms on the hands and offer some protection for sharps injuries. Gloves should be used to touch only the objects needed to do the procedure. Hand hygiene must be performed before gloves are applied and after glove removal.</p>

**For more information, call**

**Brockville 613-345-5685  
Smiths Falls 613-283-2740**

**HealthACTION Line  
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