

## **PIERCING AFTERCARE**

This advice sheet is given as your written reminder of the advised aftercare for your new piercing.

The piercing procedure involves breaking the skin's surface so there is always a potential risk for infection to occur afterwards. Your piercing should be treated as a wound initially and it is important that this advice is followed to minimise the risk of infection.

If you have any problems at all with your piercing or if you would like assistance with a jewellery change then please call back and see us. Don't be afraid to come back, we want you to be 100% happy with your piercing.

**IMPORTANT: Please remember that getting a piercing and looking after it in accordance to the advice given is the responsibility of the person getting the piercing, NOT the Piercer.**

**Please make sure you tighten jewellery balls/gems after every clean or at least once a day or they will fall out.**

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## MINIMISING INFECTION RISK

- Avoid touching the new piercing unnecessarily so that exposure to germs is reduced.
- Always thoroughly wash and dry your hands before touching your new piercing, or wear latex/nitrile gloves when cleaning it.
- If a dressing has been applied to your new piercing, leave it on for about one hour after the piercing was received and then you can remove the dressing and care for your piercing as advised below.
- Clean your piercing as advised by your piercer.
- For cleaning your piercing, you should use a saline solution. This can be bought in the studio, mixing your own sea salt solution commonly results in the product being too salty, thus drying out the area and affecting the healing process.

**Stay clear of and do NOT use surgical spirit, alcohol, soap, ointment or TCP.**

- For internally cleaning oral piercings you should use a mild alcohol-free mouthwash.
- Polyps can appear on new piercings if the piercing site is knocked, slept on or put under any other form of pressure. To avoid this happening, please keep your

piercing clear of any obstacles. Please contact the studio if a polyp occurs.

- Avoid drinking any alcohol for the first 4-5 days after receiving your piercing, as it can promote bleeding and increase swelling. The use of any recreational drugs should also be avoided as it may slow the healing process.
- For oral piercings smoking may delay the healing process. If at all possible, you should stop smoking until your piercing is fully healed.
- Please take care when looking after your piercing by avoiding touching it unnecessarily it, tanning, fake tanning, body lotions, make up and anything else instructed by the piercer.
- Avoid submerging the piercing in unhygienic bodies of water such as; swimming pools, hot tubs, lakes and so on. If unavoidable, the piercing should be protected using a waterproof sealant bandage and cleaned immediately afterwards. These are available at most pharmacies.
- Avoid direct sunlight, activities such as sunbathing may result in sunburn which will affect the healing process and could cause infection.

# ADVISED HEALING TIMES & TIPS FOR FASTER HEALING

## Ear lobe piercings

- Lobes usually take around 6-8+ weeks to heal depending on how well they are cared for.
- Clean the piercing with a saline solution once a day and gently rotate the jewellery after having cleaned the piercing. It is advised you use cotton buds to clean area as these are gentle to your skin.

## Ear cartilage piercings: Tragus | Anti-tragus | Rook | Conch | Daith | Snug | Industrial | Helix

- For cartilage piercings it can take 6-12+ months or longer to heal.
- Clean the piercing using a saline solution once a day with cotton wool buds if the piercing is hard to access.
- Try your best to keep any potentially harmful objects out of the way of your piercing - i.e. hair, jewellery, hats or headphones. Also try not to knock piercing when brushing, styling or washing your hair, as this will cause the healing process to take longer and may result in polyps.

- **Oral piercings:** Tongue | Labret (lip) | Madonna/Monroe | Medusa | Smiley | Jestrums | Vertical Labret
- Most oral piercings take 2-3+ months to heal completely and will swell up within the first few hours of receiving the piercing. Piercings where the area of tissue is thicker may take a little longer to heal.
- Lip piercings take a little longer to heal (4+ months)
- Your piercer will advise you if you are eligible for a downsize, you must follow the advice of your piercer to avoid polyps.
- When caring for an oral piercing it is advised that you use a mild alcohol-free mouthwash as the main part of the aftercare process. Using a mild alcohol-free mouthwash 2-3 times a day will also help reduce the risk of infection. If preferred, you can instead gargle a saline solution.
- Smokers should use a mild alcohol-free mouthwash 3-4 times daily.
- It is advised that you refrain from oral sex for 10 days after an oral piercing is received, as the exchange of bodily fluids may increase the risk of infection to you and your partner.

## **Facial piercings: Eyebrow | Bridge | Nostril | Septum**

- A nostril piercing will take around 3-4+ months to heal. For nostril piercings, it is important to clean the inside of the piercing (i.e. inside your nostril) as well as the outside, as bacteria can build up inside your nostril. Be as careful as you can when you are blowing your nose.
- Septum piercings can take between 6-12 weeks to heal.
- Eyebrow and bridge piercings can take 2-3+ months to heal. It is important to try and avoid any obstructions like glasses knocking the piercing. Please note these are technically surface piercings and your body may reject a surface piercing at any time, especially if knocked often. Please call in and see us if you are concerned about your piercing rejecting.
- Clean your piercing using a saline solution once a day, or more where instructed, with cotton wool buds if the piercing is hard to access.

## **Torso piercings: Navel (belly button) | Nipple**

- A navel piercing takes about 3-4+ months to heal, primarily dependant on how much the stomach muscles are used. It is advised that no hard exercise is done within the first week or two of having the piercing as this may slow the healing process.
- Nipple piercings can take around 6-12+ months to heal, depending on the circumstances. Any strenuous work done with the arms can cause the nipple jewellery to twist in towards the body, but this is normal as the piercing moves with the muscle behind the nipple.
- Clean your piercing using a saline solution once a day with cotton wool buds if the piercing is hard to access.

## **Surface piercings: Nape (back of neck) | Hips | Wrists | Cleavage**

- Surface piercings are not permanent piercings. They are estimated to last between 9 months - 2 years (if cared for properly) and take around 2+ months to heal.
- Clean your piercing using a saline solution once a day with cotton wool buds if the piercing is hard to access.

## Micro-dermals and Skin Divers

- Skin divers should not be viewed as a permanent piercing, as there is no guarantee as to how long the diver will remain in your skin. If the skin diver anchors correctly, it can last many months. Skin divers take around 2+ months to heal.
- Micro-dermals are more permanent than skin divers and can only be taken out by the piercer.
- Micro-dermals carry a lot of risk as they are prone to scarring, snagging, migration, infection, rejection and keloids. However, if the micro-dermal is looked after properly then you should have no problems, and healing times are around 2+ months.
- You should look after micro-dermals and skin divers just like any other piercings; clean the piercing using a saline solution **once every other day** as these piercings need air to get to them for them to heal properly, with a cotton wool pad.