

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.

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 either be a shop-bought solution or a home-made solution of a quarter teaspoon of table salt in a pint of warm water or tea tree oil.
Stay clear of and do NOT use surgical spirit, alcohol, soap, ointment or TCP.
- ☺ For cleaning oral piercings you should use a mild alcohol-free mouthwash eg Oral B Sensitive.
- ☺ Polyps can appear on new piercings; this is due to accidentally knocking the piercing site or pressure on the site. To avoid this happening please keep your piercing clear of any obstacles. If a polyp occurs, they can be reduced by making a paste out of aspirin (mix a crushed aspirin with a drop of water) and apply the paste to the affected area for an hour a day. This should reduce the size of the polyp within 2-3 weeks.
- ☺ 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.

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 wool pads or cotton buds to clean area as these are gentle to your skin. (Saline solution = a quarter teaspoon of table salt in a pint of warm water)

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

- ☺ For cartilage piercings it can take 20-24 weeks or longer to heal.
- ☺ Clean the piercing using a saline solution once a day with a cotton wool pad or with cotton wool buds if the piercing is hard to access. (Saline solution = a quarter teaspoon of table salt in a pint of warm water)
- ☺ 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.

Oral piercings: Tongue | Tongue Frenum | Labret (lip) | Madonna | Medusa | Cheek | Smiley | Frowny

- ☺ Most oral piercings take 8-12 weeks to heal completely and will swell up within the first few hours of receiving the piercing. Piercings such as the cheeks may take a while longer to heal as this area of tissue is thicker and may take 10-12 weeks to heal.
- ☺ 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 (Saline solution = a quarter teaspoon of table salt in a pint of warm water).
- ☺ 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 12-16 weeks 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 6-12 weeks 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 a cotton wool pad, or with cotton wool buds if the piercing is hard to access. (Saline solution = a quarter teaspoon of table salt in a pint of warm water)

Torso piercings: Navel (belly button) | Nipple

- ☺ A navel piercing takes about 12-16 weeks 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 3-6 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 a cotton wool pad, or with cotton wool buds if the piercing is hard to access. (Saline solution = a quarter teaspoon of table salt in a pint of warm water)

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 4 weeks to heal.
- ☺ Clean your piercing using a saline solution once a day with a cotton wool pad, or with cotton wool buds if the piercing is hard to access. (Saline solution = a quarter teaspoon of table salt in a pint of warm water)

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 4 weeks 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 4 weeks.
- ☺ 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 in order for them to heal properly, with a cotton wool bud. (Saline solution = a quarter teaspoon of table salt in a pint of warm water)