

Suggested Aftercare Guidelines for Body Piercing Procedures

Obtained from the Suffolk County Dept. of Health Services

Body Piercing, General Aftercare

- First, wash your hands with soap and water and dry with clean paper towels. No cloth towels!
- Soak area with sterile saline solution or a liquid anti-microbial cleanser 2-3 times daily. It may be easier to apply using saturated sterile gauze.
- Dry the piercing area with sterile gauze. Do not use cloth towels!
- You may shower daily, use soap and rinse thoroughly.
- During healing one might experience some bleeding, localized swelling, tenderness, bruising, discoloration, itching, and secretion of a whitish-yellow fluid (not pus) that will form some crust around the jewelry as the piercing heals.
- A piercing heals from the outside inward and thus may appear healed before healing is complete.
Be patient!
- Maintain clean, comfortable bedding and clothing.
- Avoid the following:
 - Undue trauma or playing with the piercing,
 - The use of alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, Betadine, Hibiclens or ointments,
 - Over-cleaning,
 - Oral contact, rough play, contact with other people's body fluids,
 - Stress, recreational drug use, excessive caffeine, nicotine and alcohol,
 - Submerging the piercing in bodies of water such as lakes, pools, hot tubs, Jacuzzis, marine water, etc.,
 - All beauty and personal care products such as cosmetics, lotions, sprays, etc., on or around the piercing.
 - Do not pick at the crusted matter at the piercing site, this is dried lymph fluid secreted by your body to cleanse the piercing. (The crusting should come off during your routine soaking & cleansing period only.)

If one suspects, in any way, that the piercing might be infected, immediately seek medical attention.

Body Piercings; Additional, Specific Aftercare for Particular Areas

a. The Navel

1. A hard, vented eye patch (sold at pharmacies) can be applied under tight clothing or secured using a length of ace bandage around the body (to avoid irritation). This can protect the navel area from restrictive clothing, excess irritation, friction, and impact during physical activities such as contact sports.
2. Do not routinely use this to cover the piercing and do not use it for extended periods of time. Its use should not inhibit adhering to your normal soaking & cleaning routine.

b. Ear, Ear Cartilage and Facial

1. Use a fresh, clean side of the pillow covering every night.
2. Maintain cleanliness of telephones, headphones/earphones, eyeglasses, helmets, hats and anything else that contacts the pierced areas.
3. Use caution when styling your hair and advise your stylist of a new or healing piercing.

c. Nipple

Use of a tight or snug, clean cotton shirt or sports bra may provide additional protection and make the piercing more comfortable, especially for sleeping or reclining.

d. Genital

1. Comfort and hygiene are vital. Initially, abstinence is strongly recommended.
2. Be patient & pursue sexual activity only if you feel ready and comfortable.
3. During healing, all sexual activities must be gentle.
4. Prior to sexual activity and to reduce trauma and increase comfort, soak piercing in warm saline solution or plain water to remove any crusty matter.
5. Use clean, disposable barriers such as condoms, dental dams, and Tegaderm to avoid contact with sex toys and partner's bodily fluids, even in long-term relationships.
6. Use a new container of water-based lubricant; do not use saliva as a lubricant.
7. After sex, perform an additional soak or cleansing with clean saline solution or water.
8. Some piercings can bleed freely for the first few days.
9. After cleansing a piercing near to or including the urethra area with a mild soap, be sure to urinate.

e. Oral

1. Use an antibacterial, alcohol free mouth rinse or sterile saline solution for 30 to 60 seconds after eating and at bedtime while your piercing heals.
2. Gently use a new soft-bristled toothbrush after the piercing to avoid irritating or traumatizing the procedure area and/or introducing bacteria into your mouth.
3. For *exterior* surfaces of cheek and lip piercings, follow the entire General Aftercare Instructions

in Section 1 of this Appendix.

4. Eat slowly taking small bites of food placed directly onto the molars. Avoid eating spicy, salty, acidic, or hot temperature foods or beverages for several days.

5. For tongue piercings, try to keep the tongue level in the mouth while chewing and swallowing. For cheek and lip piercings, avoid opening the mouth too wide as this can result in the backing of the jewelry catching on the teeth.

Estimated Healing Periods for Body Piercings

Ear lobe	6 to 8 weeks
Ear cartilage	4 months to 1 year
Eyebrow	6 to 8 weeks
Female genitalia	4 to 10 weeks
Lip	2 to 3 months
Male genitalia	4 weeks to 6 months
Navel	4 months to 1 year
Nipple	up to 6 months
Nostril	2 to 4 months
Nasal septum	6 to 8 months
Nasal bridge	8 to 10 weeks
Tongue	4 weeks

These are approximate, average healing times. Information on the healing time and the aftercare instructions must be provided to clients prior to the piercing procedure as the healing time range and aftercare rigor may not meet with the client's expectations. Human bodies are highly individual and healing times can vary greatly, are not guaranteed and may be complicated by certain medical conditions.