

## Piercing Aftercare

Please contact us with any questions or concerns.

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### How Your Body Heals:

The body will begin by sealing the new opening and defending itself with white blood cells.

The body heals quickest when protected and left alone. Initial healing can occur in 60 to 90 days, however most piercings can take up to 1 year to completely heal and set.

The better your nutrition and care during this time, the faster your piercing will heal.

### What is Normal:

Initially: some bleeding, localized swelling, tenderness, and possible bruising.

During the healing process: some discoloration, itching, and secretion of a whitish-yellow fluid (not pus) that will form some crust on the jewelry. The tissue may tighten around the jewelry as it heals.

A piercing might seem healed before the healing process is complete. This is because tissue heals from the outside in and although it feels fine, the interior remains fragile. Be patient and allow the piercing to fully heal before changing or taking out jewelry.

Piercings can shrink very quickly, especially if they are under a year old. If your piercing comes out unintentionally, please contact us immediately so that we can help you. Many times we can re-insert it without re-piercing it. The sooner you come to see us, the easier it will be.

### What *TO* do:

- Always wash your hands before touching your piercing.
- Protect your piercing from contamination by dirt or chemical products (especially make-up & skin or hair care products).
- Allow your piercing to form a scab to protect against germs and bacteria without picking, soaking, or causing it to come off too soon.

- Keep your piercing dry by using a waterproof bandage such as TEGADERM or by other means whenever coming into contact with unclean water. (Clean the area before applying bandage for a better seal).
- Only clean your piercing when you feel it has been exposed to biological or chemical contaminants such as dirt, make-up, skin care products or other irritants. The less you mess with your piercing, the better it does.
- For cleaning purposes, using a *Sterile Saline* or an *All Natural Soap* has been found to be the most effective. *Sterile Saline* is generally packaged in a can for sterility and is available at most pharmacies. (Contact lens solution is **not** sterile!) Neilmed and H2Ocean are two recognizable brands of sterile saline.
  - *All Natural Soaps* do not contain harsh ingredients like triclosan that have been linked to cancer. Dr. Bronners is readily available at many stores. Dilute your soap before applying to the piercing, without rotating it into the piercing, and then rinse thoroughly.
- Do your best to keep dried fluids intact on and around your piercing.
- Check ends of all threaded jewelry to ensure against loss; preferably with medical gloves for cleanliness and a better grip.
- Make sure your bedding is washed and changed regularly. Wear clean, comfortable, breathable clothing that protects your piercing while you are sleeping.
- Your initial jewelry will always be larger to accommodate swelling. After 90 days, you will need a fitted piece to ensure continued proper healing. Please return to see us, so that we can get you fitted for your long-term piece. Many times you will only need the post, which costs less than the original piece.
- If for any reason, you over-swell your initial jewelry, come see us immediately so that we can help you. This is free of charge.

### **What to AVOID:**

- Avoid cleaning with alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, harsh soaps, or using antibiotic ointments. Avoid Bactine®, Pierced Ear Care solutions, and other products containing Benzalkonium Chloride (BZK). None of these products are meant for long term wound care and can hinder your healing or cause damage.
- Avoid over-cleaning. This can increase irritation and slow down the healing process.
- Sleeping directly on a healing piercing can cause irritation, even causing shifts in the piercing's angle. Placing a travel pillow, on top of your pillow, and then placing your ear in the opening can be helpful to avoid this.
- Avoid tight clothing or garments that can snag or cause undue pressure on your new piercing.
- Avoid unprotected oral and sexual contact with your piercing.

### **Tips for better healing:**

- Take good care of your body by eating healthy, sleeping well and omitting recreational drugs. Stress can cause prolonged healing and/or irritation issues. The healthier your lifestyle, the easier it will be for your piercing to heal.
- Taking a Zinc supplement once daily with a meal will expedite healing.
- Cold/ice compresses can help reduce initial swelling. This is important in the beginning, to ensure that you don't swell more than your jewelry can accommodate.
- After the swelling has subsided, applying a heat compress by using a heating pad or warm washcloth inside a zip lock bag for 10-15 min. can increase circulation and bring healing cofactors to the area (be sure to use clean gauze in between for protection).
- Use sterile bandage(s) or other sterile dressing(s) when necessary.

### **Oral Care:**

- It is a good idea to purchase a new toothbrush.
- Rinse for 30-60 sec. 2 times daily (morning & night) with an anti-microbial (non-alcoholic) mouthwash, such as BIOTENE. (Listerine and alcohol based mouthwashes are too harsh and can prolong healing).
- Rinse with Distilled water after consumption of anything other than water.
- Reduce your intake of anything that will irritate your mouth, such as hot & spicy foods, tobacco, alcohol, and hot beverages. Avoid gum, candy and using your mouth unnecessarily.
- Ice, ice water, and Ibuprofen (if you're not allergic) will help reduce swelling.
- Avoid oral contact or unprotected sexual contact for the entire healing time, even if in a monogamous relationship.
- Avoid playing with your new piercing. Excess movement can cause more swelling, tearing, or scar tissue to build up.
- Due to the swelling that oral piercings have, your jewelry must be large enough to accommodate this in the beginning. After 4 weeks your swelling should have decreased enough for you to be fitted for a smaller piece. Please return to see us to be fitted for your long-term piece. Many times you will only need the post, which costs less than the original piece.

**Stages of Healing:****Phase 1** (this usually occurs in the first week or so)

Dry, small scab forms around the jewelry; new skin begins to grow.

Keep the piercing isolated, dry, and clean.

Leave scab or dry fluid intact.

**Phase 2** (usually occurs after the first few weeks)

Healthy people will notice the inside sheds the dried scab and cellular waste material. The new skin is delicate and still growing, please be gentle with it.

Continue to protect it until skin is sturdy and has completely healed and no more waste material is secreted on the jewelry.

Jewelry should not be moved or changed until healthy skin has sealed the area. If you need assistance changing jewelry, come see us so we can help you.

**Phase 3** (Usually occurs within 30 to 90 days)

For a healthy individual by now a tunnel of skin should be sturdy and sealed.

Keep cleansers, shampoos and soaps out of the opening and off of the jewelry.

When the new skin has healed, you can carefully resume regular activities.

**Lastly**

The Client shall consult a health care practitioner at the first sign of infection or allergic reaction, and report any diagnosed infection or allergic reaction to the Texas Health Department at 1-888-839-6676

We are sure that you will take proper care of your new piercing and appreciate your business. Feel free to contact us with any questions or concerns.

Thank you,  
True Blue Tattoo and Body Piercing