



## Piercing Aftercare Sheet

Effective: 5/1/22

### Cleaning solutions

Packaged sterile saline is a gentle choice for piercing aftercare. Mixing your own sea salt solution is no longer a suggested practice from the Association of Professional Piercers. We strongly encourage you to use a sterile saline labelled for use as a wound wash. Contact lens saline, eye drops, and other saline products should never be used on a body piercing. Your saline ingredients should list 0.09% sodium chloride as the only ingredient. Mixing your own sea salt solution will commonly result in the product being far too salty and strong, this can over dry the piercing and interfere with healing.

### Alternative aftercare

If sterile saline is not available in your region a sea salt solution mixture can be a viable alternative. Dissolve 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon (.75 to 1.42 grams) of non-iodized (iodine free), fine grain sea salt into one cup (8 oz. / 250ml) of warm distilled or bottled water. A stronger mixture is not better; salt solution that is too strong can irritate the piercing.

### Cleaning instructions for body piercings

**WASH** your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning or touching your piercing for any reason.

**SALINE** rinse as needed while healing. For certain piercings it may be easier to apply using clean gauze saturated with saline solution.

**RINSE** site as needed to remove cleaning solution residue. Moving or rotating jewelry is not necessary during cleaning or rinsing.

**DRY** by gently patting with clean, disposable paper products. Cloth towels can harbor bacteria and snag on jewelry causing injury.

### What is normal?

- Initially, some bleeding, localized swelling, tenderness, and/or bruising.
- During healing, some discolouration, itching, 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.
- Once healed, the jewelry may not move freely in the piercing; do not force it. If you fail to include cleaning your piercing as part of your daily hygiene routine, normal but smelly bodily secretions may accumulate.
- 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 keep cleaning throughout the entire initial healing period.
- Even healed piercings that you have had for years can shrink or close in minutes! This varies from person to person; if you like your piercing, keep jewelry in – do not leave the hole empty.

### What to do

- Wash your hands prior to touching the piercing; leave it alone except when cleaning. During healing it is not necessary to rotate your jewelry.
- Exercise during healing is fine; listen to your body.

- Make sure your bedding is washed and changed regularly. Wear clean, comfortable, breathable clothing that protects your piercing while you are sleeping.
- Showers tend to be safer than taking baths, as bathtubs can harbor bacteria. If you bathe in a tub, clean it well before each use and rinse off your piercing when you get out.

#### What to avoid

- Avoid cleaning with alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, antibacterial soaps, iodine, or any harsh products, as these can damage cells. Also avoid ointments as they prevent necessary air circulation.
- Avoid Bactine®, pierced ear care solutions, and other products containing Benzalkonium Chloride (BZK). These can be irritating and are not intended for long-term wound care.
- Avoid over-cleaning. This can delay your healing and irritate your piercing.
- Avoid undue trauma such as friction from clothing, excessive motion of the area, playing with the jewelry, and vigorous cleaning. These activities can cause the formation of unsightly and uncomfortable scar tissue, migration, prolonged healing, and other complications.
- Avoid all oral contact, rough play, and contact with others' bodily fluids on or near your piercing during healing.
- Avoid stress and recreational drug use, including excessive caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol.
- Avoid submerging the piercing in unhygienic bodies of water such as lakes, pools, hot tubs, etc. or protect your piercing using a waterproof wound sealant bandage. These are available at most drugstores and work best for nipple, navel, and surface piercing placements.
- Avoid all beauty and personal care products on or around the piercing including cosmetics, lotions, and sprays, etc.
- Don't hang charms or any object from your jewelry until the piercing is fully healed.