

# TATTOO AFTERCARE

## **- Do's & Don'ts -**

### **Immediately Post Tattoo -**

You can remove your bandage (plastic wrap/dri-loc pad) within a couple hours of leaving your appointment. Be sure to wash and moisturize after the removal and try to keep it away from excessive bacteria and irritants. If you have a medical bandage (see below) listen to your artist's advice and always review the instructions carefully. The first few days after a tattoo are critical when it comes to proper care.

### **Tegaderm/Second Skin/Dynarex/etc -**

These medical bandages can be helpful during the healing process when used correctly. The dressing is easy to use and semi-water resistant. It keeps out unwanted bacteria and will keep you from scratching or picking. However there can be risks to using it, so always read all instructions on individual brand packaging and follow directly. These types of bandages are not recommended for people with very sensitive skin or allergies to adhesives and are not meant to be worn longer than 5 or so days at a time.

### **Washing -**

Gently wash using a non-colored, non-perfumed, antibacterial soap and warm water with clean hands or paper towels. Wash at least 3 times a day for the first few days and diligently for the first week. Then gradually lower the washes as needed. Liquid Dial antibacterial soaps or tattoo specific cleansers from brands like *H2Ocean* or *Tattoo Goo* are recommended. Do not use shower gel, hand soap, or bar soap to wash your tattoo. After washing, pat the tattoo dry with a paper towel.

### **Hydrating -**

After washing and drying your tattoo, apply a thin layer of hydrating gel to your skin. For the first few days or the first week it is best to use Aquaphor, CeraVe, or A&D for their anti-inflammatory properties. Avoid products that contain lanolin or petroleum IF you have allergies. After the first week you could switch to natural cocoa butter if you wish. By the third week you could switch to fragrance free lotions like Lubriderm or Aveeno. Remember to only use as much as you need and to not apply these products thickly.

### **Do's -**

- Follow all instructions given to you by your artist.
- Take good care of your skin and your investment.
- Ask any questions you can't find a clear answer to.

### **Do Not's -**

- Do NOT use products that contain fragrances/dyes, avoid self tanning, and too much sun.
- Do NOT go swimming in pools, lakes, oceans, hot tubs, or take baths. Showers are fine.
- Do NOT scrub, pick, scratch, or pluck at your tattoo. Let your skin peel on its own.

\*\*\* After 3 weeks your tattoo will be healed and you can resume normal activities. \*\*\*

### **Normal Side Effects -**

- Blood
- Plasma
- Redness
- Swelling
- Bruising
- Soreness
- Itching
- Scabbing

All become less intense the more your tattoo heals and some people experience more symptoms than others. Typically a tattoo is healed by 2-3 weeks and all symptoms of trauma to the skin should be gone.

### **Signs of Infection & What to Do -**

- Worsening effects or itchy bumps at the tattoo site.
- Increased redness and swelling. Remember that mild redness is to be expected the first 3 or so days after getting a tattoo. If it progresses, worsens, or accelerates you need to take action due to the high likelihood of a skin infection.
- Infection can manifest with a yellow-ish pus or foul-smelling drainage.
- Other signs it has reached infection are worsening pain, and a fever or chills.

For minor infections, increase washes on the infected area daily with antibacterial soap.

Superficial infections, such as an impetigo or reddish sores around part of the tattoo, can be treated with local wound care plus topical antibiotic.

More significant local infections exhibiting redness, pus and inflammation would require a doctor's opinion.