Piercing Aftercare Guidelines

Your new body piercing has been done under clean, professional conditions here at PBH. Now, it's up to you to take good care of it.

What's Normal?

Initially: Slight bruising, swelling, bleeding, soreness, redness. Avoid aspirin, alcohol, and large amounts of caffeine as long as you are experiencing bleeding or swelling.

During Healing: Some tightness, itching, skin discoloration, pale yellow fluid (forms "Crusties" when dry - NOT PUS - do not pick at these).

***Since tissue heals from the outside in, your piercing may "feel" healed before it actually is; be patient, as the piercing interior is still fragile! Clean throughout the entire healing period

Once Healed: The jewelry may not move freely in the piercing - do not force it. If you don't include cleaning your piercing as part of your daily routine, normal but smelly secretions may accumulate

***Even healed piercings you have had for years can shrink or close in minutes - if you like your piercing, keep your jewelry in! Retainers are available for short-term, necessary removals such as MRI's.

Irritation Bumps (Not Keloids!)

These bumps are slightly raised, fleshy, red or pink in color, and appear right next to the piercing. They form as a result of trauma, improper cleaning, chemical or physical irritation, moisture buildup, sleeping on, or failure to downsize your jewelry. Never pick at or try to pop a bump on a piercing.

Rejection

"Rejection" happens when your body can not heal a piercing and slowly pushes the jewelry out. Typical signs are: scarring, severe thinning of the piercing, flaky skin, and excessive itching. Jewelry may need to be removed to avoid permanent scarring.

General Aftercare

Nicotine intake, poor diet, drinking alcohol, caffeine consumption, and excess stress can prolong healing.

Don't touch, twist, remove, or play with your piercing: this can cause irritation bumps, scar tissue, and prolonged healing

Regularly check tightness of threaded ends with cleansed hands so you do not lose your new piece. It's a good idea to carry a back-up post/end with you for accidental breaks/losses.

Do not swim or submerge your new piercing into unclean bodies of water for at least 4 months (e.g., hot tubs, pools, baths, rivers, etc.) You may use a waterproof wound-sealant bandage (like Tegaderm). These are available at most drugstores and work best for nipple/navel piercings.

Don't use alcohol, peroxide-based products (can also damage your jewelry!), Bactine, BZK, tea tree oil, contact solution, eye drops, or ointments. Do not make your own sea salt mixture. These are all too harsh and will damage healing cells. Let your body naturally heal your piercing.

Wash and change bedding regularly. Disinfect headphones, glasses, phones, hats, and anything that may come into contact with the pierced area.

Note: If you have high blood pressure or a heart condition, please check with your doctor before using a saline product as your primary cleaning solution.

Infection?

Piercers are NOT medical professionals and cannot diagnose an infection! If you suspect one, see a physician ASAP. Infections are caused by pathogens entering the piercing site and may be accompanied by: fever, chills, red streaks, pus, or nausea. Do NOT remove your jewelry: this eliminates your piercing's ability to drain itself. This may trap the infection inside and cause an abscess.

Oral Piercings

Rinse mouth with clean, bottled water after eating or drinking. Avoid spicy, acidic, hot (temp.), or salty foods/beverages.

Break up food by hand and place directly onto back molars and chew slowly.

Reduce swelling with OTC anti-inflammatories or allow crushed ice to dissolve in your mouth.

Plaque/calcium may accumulate on some jewelry, so brush gently with a (NEW!) soft-bristled toothbrush after initial soreness subsides.

Sleep with your head elevated above your heart for the first few nights to reduce overnight swelling.

Alcohol- and peroxide-free gentle mouthwash (like Biotene) can be used ONCE a day. Avoid using whitening products (or products containing peroxide).

Avoid rough sexual activity, kissing, or exchange of bodily fluids during the initial healing phase. Use barriers such as dental dams or waterproof bandages.

Body Piercings

Navel: a hard, vented eye-patch (sold at pharmacies) can be applied under tight clothing or secured using a length of elastic bandage. This can protect the area from restrictive clothing and impact during physical activities such as contact sports.

Nipples: tight cotton shirts may provide support and protect the area - especially for sleeping. Avoid compression-fit clothing that will cause excess friction on the jewelry while healing.

Avoid all cosmetics, shampoo, lotions, and soaps on and around piercing sites. Use caution when styling hair or changing clothes.

Do not sleep on your piercing! Invest in a travel pillow to sleep on. Sleeping on your piercings can cause your jewelry to shift angles, which is often irreversible, and will cause piercing bumps.

Downsizing

Most piercings need to be downsized to shorter posts to prevent complications. Schedule a follow-up appt. in the timeframe suggested by your piercer. This reduces the possibility of snagging or bumping your piercing, as well as excess movement.

This should be the only time your piercing is removed before it is fully healed!

Cleaning Your Piercing

1: **WASH** hands before touching your piercing.
2: **SPRAY** with an isotonic Sterile Saline Wound Wash 1-2x daily (.09% Sodium Chloride ONLY - no additives!) OR warm, running water to soften buildup.
3: **WIPE** with disposable paper products, or wet cotton swabs to remove "crusties." Never pick these off.
4: **DRY** with sterile gauze (no towels!) or a hair dryer.

TLDR; Sterile Saline or Clean Water should be the ONLY things that go into your piercings. Don't touch them. Don't sleep on them. Don't move them. Period.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns! Happy Healing! | @hayley_piercer | hayleypiercer@gmail.com
Information presented in this handout is courtesy of the APP. More info can be found at https://safepiercing.org/