

irritation from adhesive). This can protect the area from restrictive clothing, excess irritation, and impact during physical activities such as contact sports.

### Ear/Ear Cartilage and Facial

- ◆ Use the t-shirt trick: dress your pillow in a large, clean t-shirt and turn it nightly; one clean t-shirt provides four clean surfaces for sleeping.
- ◆ Maintain cleanliness of telephones, headphones, eyeglasses, helmets, hats and anything that contacts the pierced area.
- ◆ Use caution when styling your hair and advise your stylist of a new or healing piercing.

### Nipple

- ◆ The support of a tight cotton shirt or sports bra may provide protection and feel comfortable, especially for sleeping.

### Genital

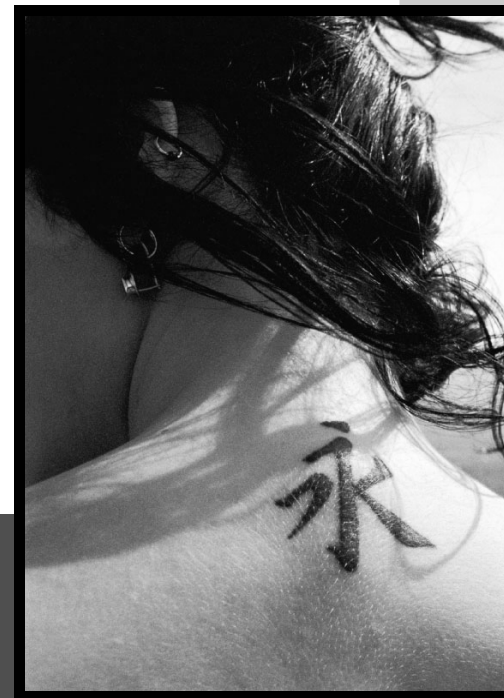
- ◆ In most cases you can engage in sexual activity as soon as you feel ready. *Comfort and Hygiene* are vital.
- ◆ During healing all sexual activities **must** be gentle.
- ◆ To increase comfort and decrease trauma, soak in warm saline solution or plain water to remove any crusty matter prior to sexual activity.
- ◆ Use barriers such as condoms, dental dams, and Tegaderm, etc. to avoid contact with a partner's bodily fluids, even in long-term relationships.
- ◆ Use clean, disposable barriers on sex toys.
- ◆ Wash hands before touching on or near the piercing.
- ◆ Use a **new** container of water based lubricant. Do not use your own saliva.
- ◆ After sex, an additional saline soak or clean water rinse is suggested.
- ◆ Prince Albert and Apadravya piercings can bleed freely for the first few days.
- ◆ If using soap, urinate after cleaning any piercing that is near the urethra.

### Tongue/Lip (Labret)/Cheek

- ◆ Swelling will normally occur within the first 72 hours. It is important to drink lots of cold liquids and gently suck on ice to help minimize the swelling. Use ice 30 minutes on, 30 minutes off to help keep maximum blood flow.
- ◆ Don't share plates, cups, or eating utensils with others. Replace your toothbrush and keep it clean during the healing period. Keep dirty fingers, pencils, sunglasses etc. out of your mouth.
- ◆ Avoid excessive talking, playing with the jewelry and all oral sexual contact (including wet kissing) during the healing time.
- ◆ Check that the threaded ends of the jewelry are on securely. Tighten them each day to ensure the jewelry stays in place.
- ◆ Those with tongue piercings should be cautioned that playing with the jewelry excessively is frequently the cause of reported tooth and gum damage and should be avoided.

*Each body is unique and healing times vary considerably. If you have any questions, please contact your piercer.*

# Suggested Aftercare for Body Piercings



## Congratulations!

You've just received a body piercing by a skilled and knowledgeable professional who cleaned and disinfected the area pierced, used sterile instruments, jewelry and single use needle.

### NOW IT IS UP TO YOU TO TAKE PROPER CARE OF YOUR PIERCING DURING THE CRUCIAL HEALING PERIOD. HOW YOUR PIERCING HEALS IS UP TO YOU AND YOUR BODY.

Your \_\_\_\_\_ piercing is expected to take \_\_\_\_\_ or longer to heal.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Piercer  
\_\_\_\_\_ Jewelry  
\_\_\_\_\_ Earliest Change/Downsize Date

## What is Normal?

- ◆ Initially, some bleeding, localized swelling, tenderness or bruising.
- ◆ During healing: Some discoloration, itching, secretion of a whitish-yellow fluid (not pus) that will form 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 may seem healed before healing is complete. This is because piercings heal from the outside in, and although it feels healed the tissue remains fragile on the inside. **BE PATIENT**, and keep cleaning throughout the entire healing period.

## What To Do

- ◆ Wash your hands prior to touching the piercing; leave it alone except when cleaning. It is not necessary to rotate the jewelry while healing except possibly during cleaning.
- ◆ Make sure that your jewelry and skin is free from any discharge before you attempt to move the jewelry. Irritation can occur when crusty matter is accidentally forced into the piercing.
- ◆ Stay healthy! Eat a nutritious diet. The healthier your lifestyle, the easier it will be for your piercing to heal. Exercise during healing is fine, just "listen" to your body.
- ◆ Make sure your bedding is kept clean and changed regularly. Wear clean, comfortable, breathable clothing that protects your piercing while sleeping.
- ◆ Showering is safer than taking a bath, because bathtubs tend to harbor bacteria. If you would like to take a bath, clean the tub well before each use.

## Cleaning Solutions

Use either one or both of the following solutions for cleaning body piercings:

- ◆ Packaged sterile saline solution with **no** additives (read the label!) or non-iodized sea salt mixture: Dissolve 1/8 - 1/4 teaspoon of non-iodized (iodine-free) sea salt into one cup (8 oz) of warm distilled or bottled water. A stronger mixture is **not** better! Saline solution that is too strong can irritate the piercing.
- ◆ Liquid anti-microbial or germicidal soap.

## Cleaning Instructions for Body Piercings

1. **WASH** your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning, or touching on or near your piercing.
2. **SALINE** soak at least two to three times daily. Simply invert a cup of warm saline

solution over the area to form a vacuum for a few minutes. The longer you soak, the better. For certain placements, it may be easier to apply using fresh gauze or a cotton ball saturated in saline solution. A brief rinse will remove any residue.

3. **SOAP** no more than once or twice a day. While showering, lather up a pearl size drop of the soap to clean the jewelry and the piercing. Leave the cleanser on the piercing no more than thirty seconds, then rinse thoroughly to remove all traces of the soap from the piercing.
4. **DRY** with disposable paper products such as gauze or tissues, because cloth towels can harbor bacteria and catch on new piercings causing injury. Pat gently to avoid trauma.

## What To Avoid

- ◆ 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 the use of alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, Betadine, Hibiclens or ointment.
- ◆ Avoid over cleaning. This can delay your healing and irritate your piercing.
- ◆ 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 bodies of water such as lakes, pools, jacuzzis, etc. Or protect your piercing using a special water-proof bandage such as Tegaderm, which is available at drug stores.
- ◆ Avoid **all** beauty and personal care products on or around the piercing including cosmetics, lotions, sprays, etc.
- ◆ Don't hang charms or any other object from your jewelry until the piercing is fully healed.

## Hints and Tips

### Jewelry

- ◆ Unless there is a problem with the size, style, or material of the initial jewelry, leave it in place for the *entire* healing period. A qualified piercer should perform any necessary jewelry change that occurs during healing.
- ◆ Contact your piercer if your jewelry must be temporarily removed (such as for a medical procedure). There are non-metallic jewelry alternatives.
- ◆ Leave jewelry in at all times. Even old, well healed piercings can shrink and close in minutes after having been there for years! If removed re-insertion can be difficult or impossible.
- ◆ With clean hands or paper product, be sure to regularly check the threaded ends on your jewelry for tightness. ("Righty-tighty, lefty-loosey")
- ◆ Carry a clean spare ball in case of loss or breakage.
- ◆ Should you decide you no longer want the piercing, seek professional help in the removal of the jewelry and continue cleaning the piercing until the hole closes. In most cases only a small indentation will remain.

## For Particular Areas

### Navel

- ◆ A hard, vented eye patch (sold at pharmacies) can be applied under tight clothing (such as nylon stockings) or secured using a length of ace bandage around the body (to avoid