

## Skin Penetration Procedures: Body Piercing & Tattooing



Procedures that involve skin penetration carry a higher risk of spreading disease. These procedures

can cause infections and spread viruses such as Hepatitis C and B and HIV.

### Single-Use Disposable Instruments

- **Needles must not be reused and must be single-use**
- Only disposable instruments or re-useable instruments that have been cleaned, disinfected or sterilised can be used.
- Ensure sterile packaged equipment and jewellery is labelled with the manufacturer's statement that it is sterile.
- To prevent cross contamination, all liquids, creams, inks and pigments must be decanted into single use containers and a single use applicator must be used for each person undergoing the procedure (no double dipping).
- Sterile packaging should be opened just prior to starting the treatment.

### Sterilisation of Re-useable Articles

- If re-useable articles are sterilised on site, they must be sterilised using a bench-top steriliser which complies with *AS2182-1998 Sterilisers – Steam – Benchtop*.
- There must be at least one person present when the steriliser is being used that is adequately trained in its operation.
- Sterilisation must be carried out in accordance with *AS/NZS 4815:2006 Office-based health care facilities – reprocessing of reusable medical and surgical instruments and equipment, and maintenance of the associated environment*.
- Equipment must be thoroughly cleaned before processing through a benchtop steriliser.
- All instruments must be wrapped and packaged prior to processing through a bench-top steriliser.
- The bench-top steriliser must have a printout facility to record the cycle parameters, otherwise

a Class 4, 5 or 6 chemical indicator must be placed in one instrument pack in every load.

- Equipment that is difficult to clean and sterilise, should only be used once and then thrown away (single use only).
- If needs are used in any skin penetration procedure, they must be single use and disposed of into an appropriate sharps container.

### Preparing the Client's Skin

A client's skin needs to be effectively prepared before the procedure to reduce the likelihood of infection. Ensure the following:

1. If the area to be penetrated is visibly dirty, wash with soap and water to clean.
2. Before penetrating the skin with an instrument or jewellery, apply antiseptic to the skin at and around the piercing site. Use an antiseptic from the below list and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
3. Before applying antiseptic ensure the client is not allergic to an ingredient in the antiseptic.
4. Where additional skin preparation is needed after initial skin swabbing, use a fresh alcohol swab.
5. If individually packaged 70% ethyl or isopropyl alcohol swabs are used to prepare the skin, check the package is intact before opening and if it isn't throw it out and use one that is intact.
6. Pour antiseptic to be used on a client into a clean, dry container (e.g. open dish) from the stock solution. Discard any leftover antiseptic after use. Clean and dry the container before use on the next client.
7. Swab the skin penetration site in a circular motion starting at the centre of the site. Ensure the swab remains moist during swabbing.
8. Ensure the skin penetration site is dry before the skin is pierced and do not touch the site by hand after swabbing.
9. Do not use antiseptics that have passed the manufacturer's "use by" date.

#### Antiseptic solutions:

- 70 – 80% v/v ethyl alcohol
- 60 – 70% v/v isopropyl alcohol
- Alcoholic (isopropyl and ethyl) formulations of 0.5 to 4% w/v chlorhexidine

- 10% aqueous providone-iodine (1% w/V available iodine)
- 30% or 70% alcoholic aqueous providone-iodine

*Hair removal prior to procedure:*

- If the client has head hair that may touch the skin penetration site, ask them to tie it back so the site cannot be contaminated.
- Shave the site with a single-use disposable safety razor.

<i>Mouth piercing</i>	Ensure the client’s mouth (including tongue, teeth and gums) is clean, e.g. clean with toothbrush. Antiseptics are not needed for piercing inside the mouth.
<i>Genital piercing</i>	Clean the piercing site with warm water and a liquid soap before genital piercing. Antiseptics are not needed for genital piercing.

**Body Piercing**

- Piercing guns must be wiped after each use with a suitable disinfectant after use.
- Jewellery used for body piercing should be highly polished, smooth and free from surface imperfections. It should also have low or non-allergenic qualities, i.e. high qualities of stainless steel, titanium, niobium, palladium or 18 carat gold.
- Jewellery should not be used that has been on display unless sterilised before use.
- Needles must not be reused.
- The area to be pierced should be cleaned with a skin antiseptic (see above).
- Check sterilised jewellery packaging is intact before using and open just prior to starting the procedure.
- Sterile parts of the equipment that will penetrate the skin should not be handled. If handling is necessary, a sterile insertion tube, a pre-packed sterile alcohol swab, a sterile dry swab, or sterile single use gloves should be used.
- There should be no exchange of jewellery once inserted into an opening.



- Aftercare instructions should be provided to the client on cleaning the site and jewellery, infections, healing times and what possible problems to look for.

**Tattooing**

- Single-use stencils, screens and patterns are highly recommended. If not single-use, they should be effectively cleaned and disinfected before re-using on another client.
- Do not apply stencils with re-useable applicators (i.e. roll-on deodorant sticks). Use soapy water.
- Ensure tattoo needles, needle bars, tubes or barrels are clean and sterile before using on a client.
- Remove the tattoo gun’s hand piece, clean with warm water and detergent on a moistened paper towel then allow to dry between clients.
- When you have finished tattooing a client, the affected area must be covered with sterile gauze dressing to protect from contamination.

**Other Requirements**

Tattoo premises and tattoo artists must comply with the requirements of the *Tattoo Parlour Act 2012* and be registered. Contact NSW Department of Fair Trading for more information.

Both tattooist and body piercing practitioners must comply with the *Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998*.

**Personal Hygiene**

A clean gown or apron and single use gloves must be worn by the person undertaking the procedure. If a person carrying out the procedure has a cut or wound, it should be covered with a sealed waterproof bandage. Hands should be washed:

- Before and after attending a client.
- Before and after a procedure.
- After exposure to a bodily substance.
- After touching a client’s surroundings.
- After the removal of gloves.

**More information**

Visit NSW Health website for more information: <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/skinpenetration>. Alternatively, contact Council and ask to speak to the Environmental Health Officer.