

Aftercare

Once a tattoo or piercing has been carried out you should be told how to look after it and be given an aftercare advice sheet. Remember:

- Unwashed hands are the worst enemies of piercing and tattoos. Touching your piercing or tattoo can spread enough germs to possibly cause an infection to your piercing or tattoo.
- A tattoo may sometimes form a small scab as part of the healing process.
- Picking at scabs will reduce the intensity of the colour of your tattoo.
- Exposure to sunlight will also cause the colour to fade faster.
- Some people can have a mild allergic reaction with the ink of the tattoo; it may feel itchy at times, especially when exposed to sunlight

What can go wrong?

Pain, Bleeding and Swelling

Using a good and experienced tattooist or piercer will minimise the risk of this whilst still getting the best result.

Localised Infection

This is where the wound becomes infected with bacteria and is common when you have been tattooed or pierced in unhygienic conditions. It can also occur if your aftercare is poor.

Infectious Disease

There is a risk of contracting serious and incurable blood-borne viruses including Hepatitis (B or C) and HIV. The number of cases of Hepatitis has risen dramatically over the past few years and many people may not have symptoms or even realise that they are infected. A reputable tattooist or piercer will have had the vaccine for Hepatitis B.

Allergic reactions

Let the tattooist or piercer know if you are allergic to anything. For example latex, nickel or other metals, the pigments (in the inks) or the cleaning and disinfecting chemicals which may come into contact with your skin. If you are concerned about any of the above problems see your doctor.

Top Tips

- Check that the business is registered with Middlesbrough Council's Community Protection Service.
- Check yourself that the premises look clean, tidy and hygienic.
- Look at the tattoo artist's portfolio of artwork.
- Talk to the artist about what you want and ask lots of questions.
- Follow the aftercare advice that is given to you.
- If you have any doubts about the tattooist/ piercer, the premises or just about having a tattoo or body piercing, leave the premises and give yourself more time to think about it.

Further Advice & Help

Middlesbrough Council's Community Protection Service

Tel: 01642 728665 www.middlesbrough.gov.uk

THINKING OF GETTING A...

Tattoo

OR A...

Body Piercing



HEALTH & SAFETY ADVICE

What you should know about Tattoos and Body Piercing...

This advice aims to help you make the right and safe choices when having a tattoo or body piercing.

Do I really want to have a piercing/tattoo?

You must think about this carefully. If you decide "yes" you want it done, remember, a tattoo will be with you for life. Fashions change and what you like now you may not like in the future. Tattoo removal can be costly and may not always be effective.

So what should you do now and what are the important things you should consider?

Where should I go?

Don't rush into the first studio you see. Look around a few studios before you decide where to go and ask to see examples of their work.

Do you know someone who has had a tattoo or piercing recently?

If yes, ask them:

- Are they happy with it?
- Did they have any problems?
- Would they go back to the same studio again?
- Was the studio clean?
- Did the tattooist/piercer know what they were doing?

Is the studio registered with Middlesbrough Council?

Anyone who carries out tattooing or piercing in the Middlesbrough Council area must be registered. They should display their registration certificate where their customers can see it. A registered premises has been inspected by an Environmental Health Officer to make sure that they operate in a strict hygienic manner and meet the requirement of the local byelaws. If you want to know more details about the standards in a premises you can request this under the Freedom of Information laws. Contact us for more information.

If you cannot see the certificate displayed then you are advised to **LEAVE** the studio.

IF YOU USE AN UNREGISTERED TATTOOIST OR PIERCER YOU MAY BE RISKING YOUR HEALTH!

How old do you need to be to get a tattoo?

You must be 18 years of age or over before you can have a tattoo.

I have heard that I can have a tattoo done with parental consent if I am 16 or 17 years of age. Is this true?

WRONG. It is an offence to tattoo a person under the age of 18 years except when a qualified medical practitioner performs a tattoo for medical reasons.

How old do you need to be to get a body piercing?

There is no legal minimum age for body piercing, however most responsible piercers will ask for parental consent if you are under 16 years of age (and they will not pierce intimate areas).

What should I expect?

Before you have your piercing or tattoo done you should be asked to fill out a consent form. This will ask you for your name, address, and age. You may be asked to prove your age, so it's a good idea to have some form of identification on you. Suitable identification is a passport, photo driving licence card or a 'PASS' hologram card.

The consent form should also have a list of medical conditions on it. If you have, or have had, one of these you should consult a doctor before getting the tattoo or piercing done. It is not advisable to have a tattoo, if you are under the influence of drink or drugs, unwell or have recently used a sunbed.

Will it hurt?

This will depend on the individual's pain threshold, the type and size of piercing/tattoo you are having and where the piercing/tattoo is being done on your body.

What about the needles?

All piercing and tattoos must be done with a new, clean, prepacked needle, which you should see being opened in front of you. Never let a needle be used on you that has been taken out of a liquid. Remember, using dirty needles is the biggest cause of an infection in a piercing or tattoo and it is you who will suffer.

Artwork designs

It is important that you are happy with the standard of work that the tattooist or piercer does. You should look at their portfolio of photographs before you consent to having the work done. Tattooing equipment is easy to buy and unfortunately there are many untrained (and unskilled) people using them to offer cheap tattoos at home. Price should be the least important factor. As the saying goes "You get what you pay for".