

Safer Tattooing

What you should know

- Use new sterile needles every time you visit.
- Use special tattooing ink (other inks such as pen inks or photocopying inks are toxic and must not be used). Be aware that some people may be sensitive to certain colour dyes.
- Use new disposable ink caps (which are small containers of tattooing ink.) Ask if the artist throws the ink caps away after each use – ink caps should not be re-used.
- Use a new disposable razor if shaving is needed. It is important to have the area cleaned after shaving, before the tattoo.
- Make sure you leave with written aftercare instructions.



Infection can ruin your new artwork or piercing!

- Make sure the tattoo is covered with an individually wrapped bandage used to cover wounds.
- Tattoos can take up to six weeks to heal.
- Piercings can take from six weeks to over one year to heal.
- Follow the aftercare instructions given by the tattooist/piercer.
- If you must touch your tattoo/piercing, **WASH YOUR HANDS FIRST.**
- If the tattooed or pierced area becomes red, swollen, tender or if pus develops, you may have an infection. See your doctor immediately.

Resources

For more information about safer tattooing and body piercing, please call or visit

Peel Works Needle Exchange
647-225-1623

[www.peelregion.ca/health/
bodyandbeautyart](http://www.peelregion.ca/health/bodyandbeautyart)

www.peelneedleexchange.ca

www.intheknowpeel.ca

www.peelregion.ca/health

Region of Peel – Public Health
905-799-7700



**TATTOOING
AND
PIERCING
MAKE IT SAFER**

 **Region of Peel**
Working for you
Public Health

Shopping Tips

For safer tattooing or body piercing, take the time to find a professional artist.

Why?

- You want a good experience and quality work that is an expression of you.
- A professional artist wants your whole experience to be positive.



- You don't want to be put at risk for infections. When the skin is pierced (as in tattooing and piercing), viruses and germs can easily get into the body. HIV, hepatitis and other infections are risks of tattooing and piercing that can be avoided.
- Professional artists will be just as concerned as you are about preventing infections and producing quality art work.

How would I know if I've found a professional artist?

Professional artists will:

- Have samples of their work available to show you.
- Be willing to answer all of your questions (you have the right to ask them).

- Be willing to explain the cost of their work (cheaper doesn't always mean better — you get what you pay for).
- Explain how they clean and sterilize their equipment. Blood and other body fluids from a previous customer can remain on equipment and work surfaces. All work areas should be carefully cleaned and all equipment sterilized in an autoclave (a steam machine).
- Have a clean, sanitary, well-lit working environment. All surfaces such as counter and table tops should be made of hard material that is easily cleaned with a disinfectant such as household bleach.
- Use new piercing or tattooing needles for each customer. Needles that have been used on other customers may be contaminated with HIV and hepatitis viruses. Also, used needles can have barbs, hooks, rough bumps or germs that can tear your skin or cause infection.
- Wash their hands and use new gloves during the entire procedure.
- Not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. They will make sure you aren't either.
- Tell you how to take care of your tattoo and give you aftercare instructions to take home.

If the artist can't or won't answer all of your questions, don't be intimidated. Leave and find a different artist. It's your body, your money and your choice.



Safer Piercing

What you should know

- The best place to pierce is a meaty skin area. Avoid the neck, joints, arteries and tendons.
- Facial piercing is tricky. Talk to your artist about your options.
- Inform the artist if you have a metal allergy.
- Possible complications can include allergies to metal and infections. Mouth piercing can damage teeth.
- There is special jewellery designed for piercing. Make sure your artist uses it.
- Sterile surgical, single-use disposable piercing needles must be used for body piercing. Ear piercing guns should not be used for anything other than ear lobes. (Do not use on cartilage.)
- The artist must first clean the area to be pierced with soap and water and then with a skin antiseptic such as alcohol.
- After piercing, don't leave without written aftercare instructions.