

Skin Penetration – General

Many beauty and cosmetic enhancement procedures, including waxing, involve the penetration of skin thereby increasing the risk of infection. Infection can occur if equipment is contaminated, from direct person-to-person contact with blood or other body substances, or while the treated area is healing.



Beauticians, Nail Salons and Tattooists

These businesses are known as skin penetration businesses and must be registered with Council.

In order to comply with the *Public Health Act 2010*:

- the premises must be kept clean and hygienic; and
- instruments and equipment which penetrate the skin, including needles and jewellery must be sterile at the time of use. The operator must be able to explain how they have been sterilised if they are reusable or the sterile packaging must be intact for single use equipment; and
- the operator should not have exposed cuts or wounds and their clothes must be clean; and
- the premises must have accessible handwashing facilities.

Infections

Poor hygiene and lack of care during or after your skin penetration procedure can lead to infection, allergic reactions, nerve damage or transmission of serious infectious diseases.

Complications from any procedure may include:

- infection or an abscess at the site of the piercing,
- bloodstream infection, if an infection of a wound/piercing isn't treated early,
- problems with healing or scarring (for example, keloid scarring),
- excessive bleeding – this requires prompt medical attention,
- blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C or HIV from non-sterilised equipment.

In recent years, some tattooing inks have been recalled due to the presence of dangerous chemicals or contamination with microorganisms. Ask your tattooist for details about the inks they use. They should be able to provide you with a safety data sheet.

Signs of infection include pain, redness, swelling and thick discharge (yellow or green) from the damaged site. **See your doctor immediately if you have any of these signs.** If you have been pierced then do not remove the jewellery until you seek further advice.



What to look for when visiting a salon or tattooist

When performing a skin penetration procedure, the operator should:

- Wash their hands at the beginning and end of the procedure and whenever they take a break during the procedure, such as when answering the phone;
- clean and disinfect your skin thoroughly before and afterwards;
- use single-use disposable needles if tattooing or piercing;
- use equipment that has been sterilised –they should open the pouch containing the equipment they want to use in front of you to prove this;
- use only new sterilised jewellery for piercings.

The cost of making equipment safe is small compared with the cost of infecting yourself or a client.

For further information

For further information regarding Skin Penetration; please contact Council's Environmental Health Officer or Customer Service on:

Phone: 02 9330 6400

E-mail: mail@georgesriver.nsw.gov.au