

## Where should I go to get a tattoo?

Have the tattooing done by a professional. A professional tattoo artist will be glad to answer any and all questions. If they are not willing to answer questions, go to someone else who will.

Ask the following questions:

- ◆ Are new sterile needles used for each client? After use, are the needles immediately thrown away into a biohazard container?
- ◆ Are the dyes new for each client?
- ◆ Does the artist use sterile techniques?
- ◆ Does the artist wash his/her hands for each procedure and wear clean, new gloves with each person?
- ◆ How does the artist clean his work area? It's required that a hospital grade disinfectant be used to clean all work surfaces between clients.

Make sure everything is new and sterile before it touches your body. Watch the artist open the package if possible.

Interview the artist and visit the studio prior to having the tattoo. Ask what training and experience the artist has. Ask for references. Ask to see examples of the artist's work. The artist should follow safe hygienic practices and the studio should be clean.

Choose an artist who is experienced and preferably a member of a professional tattoo organization, such as, *Alliance of Professional Tattooist*.

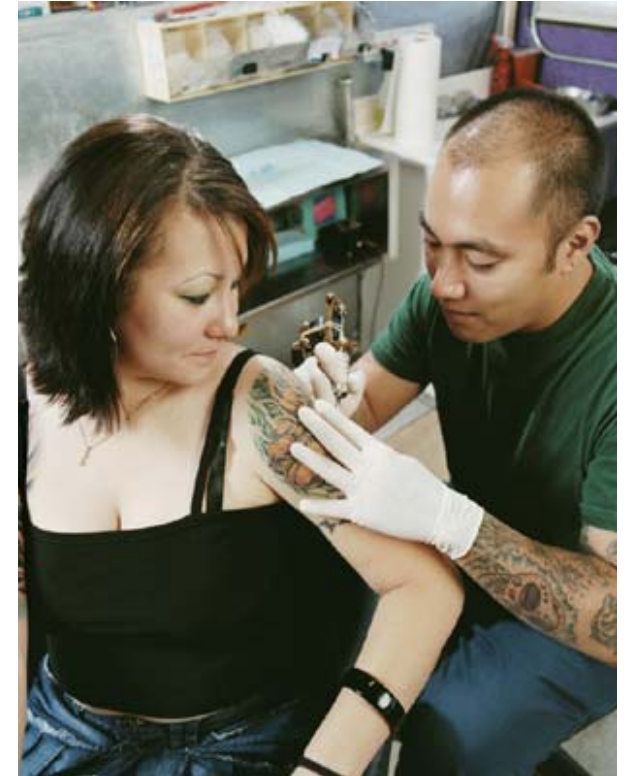
Check with the local health department regarding regulations for body artists.

*Public Health... Everyday, Everywhere, Everyone*

For more information on Tattooing visit:  
[www.safe-tattoo.com](http://www.safe-tattoo.com)



## Thinking About Getting a Tattoo?



For more information about JCPH's Body Art Regulation Program, please call the Environmental Health Services Program:  
**303.271.5700**

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**Jefferson County  
Public Health**

Golden

[www.jeffco.us/health](http://www.jeffco.us/health)

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Environmental Health Services**

**303-271-5700**

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## What are the General Concerns?

Tattoos are designs made by injecting ink into the skin with a needle. Here are some things to think about before getting a tattoo:

- ◆ A tattoo is permanent. Tattoos can sometimes be removed, but the process is painful, long, expensive, can cause scarring and doesn't always work. It costs much more to remove a tattoo than to apply one! The more colors in the tattoo, the more difficult it will be to remove.
- ◆ Getting a tattoo hurts. Most people find the pain is more annoying than unbearable. Tattooing on the fleshy parts of the arms and legs is the least painful. Areas over bone hurt more.
- ◆ Tattoos take about 2 - 3 weeks to heal. It's up to you to follow all the instructions for care of the tattoo to prevent infection and other complications.
- ◆ You will be buying a service and have the right to know about the artist's training, experience and sanitation practices. It's important the artist and studio practice good health and safety standards. Unclean, unsterilized instruments carry a risk for HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C infection. Other infections that are possible include blood poisoning, staphylococcal or streptococcal infections.

## What are some signs of infection?

Talk to your artist about what to expect after getting a tattoo. Although some swelling around the tattoo is normal, you should talk to your tattoo artist and to your health care provider if you have any of the following signs of infection after getting a tattoo:

- ✓ Thick yellow or green discharge coming from the tattoo
- ✓ Continued oozing or bleeding
- ✓ Red streaks or a hot sensation moving away from the tattoo
- ✓ Pain that continues or gets worse
- ✓ Any unusual pain or swelling



## Are there any other health issues to be aware of?

- ✓ You should never cover a mole with a tattoo, because it could turn cancerous without you knowing it.
- ✓ If you tend to form large, bumpy scars (keloids), these may form in the tattoo.
- ✓ Tell your doctor or health care provider about any tattoos because some interfere with x-rays. X-rays can burn tattooed areas.
- ✓ If you are pregnant or have certain medical conditions, including diabetes, talk to your health care provider and tattoo artist before getting a tattoo.
- ✓ Alcohol and/or certain drugs may cause a person to have poor judgment. If you have been drinking or using other drugs, you should consider waiting until you are no longer under the influence of the alcohol or drugs to get your tattoo.
- ✓ The American Association of Blood Banks won't accept blood donations until 1 year after a person has received a tattoo.
- ✓ It's recommended that you wear sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 30 on the tattoo for the rest of your life because the area will always be more sensitive to sunburn. Sun exposure will fade colors.