

How do you choose a body artist and studio?

- ◆ Choose an artist who is experienced and preferably a member of a professional piercing organization, such as, *Association of Professional Piercers*.
- ◆ Check with the local health department regarding regulations for body artists.
- ◆ Interview the artist and visit the studio prior to having the piercing. 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.
- ◆ The artist is required to wash his/her hands before the procedure and wear a new pair of disposable gloves throughout the piercing process, with each person.
- ◆ The skin where the piercing will be done is required to be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to the procedure.
- ◆ Needles are required to be new, sterile, individually wrapped and thrown away in biohazard containers after one use. All other instruments should be soaked in an enzymatic detergent for 10 minutes, thoroughly washed, air dried and autoclaved. Corks and rubber bands should also be sterilized.
- ◆ The artist is required to clean all work surfaces with a hospital grade disinfectant between clients.
- ◆ The artist must explain the procedure, potential risks and complications before the procedure; provide written and verbal instructions for care after the procedure; and be readily available if problems arise after the procedure.

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For more information on Piercing visit:
www.safepiercing.org

For more information
about JCPH's Body Art
Regulation Program,
please call the
Environmental Health
Services Program:
303.232.6301

Jefferson County Public Health

645 Parfet Street
Lakewood, CO 80215

jeffco.us/public-health

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**Thinking About
Getting
a Piercing?**



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What are the General Concerns?

Piercing punctures the skin with a sharp, hollow needle. Jewelry is then inserted through the hole. Here are some things to think about before getting a piercing:

- ◆ Only certain metals are safe. Jewelry used in piercing should be made from 316L surgical implant grade stainless steel, 14 or 18 karat solid, niobium or titanium. This reduces the risk of chronic irritation or rejection, which can lead to scar formation or infection.
- ◆ Healing times, care of the piercing and possible complications depend on the location of the piercing. Healing time can vary from one month to one year depending upon location. Most new piercings require cleaning with an antiseptic or antibiotic soap or solution. It's up to you to follow all the instructions for care of the piercing to prevent infection and other complications.
- ◆ You will be buying a service and have a right to know about the artist's training, experience and sanitation practices. It's important that 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 possible infections include blood poisoning, staphylococcal or streptococcal infections.



What are some signs of infection?

Talk to the body artist about what to expect after getting a piercing, such as pain, swelling, healing time, and care of the piercing. Signs of infection could be:

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

Are there any other health related issues to think about?

Here are some things to think about depending on the location of the piercing:

Tongue

- ◆ Newly pierced tongues may swell a lot in the first days. The mouth also needs to be rinsed frequently, especially after eating.
- ◆ Studs and rings can chip and crack teeth.
- ◆ Drooling and speech impediments are rare but can happen.
- ◆ You might end up with a numb tongue and loss of taste if the piercer hits a nerve.

Eyebrows and Nose

- ◆ The hole might be permanent.
- ◆ Nose piercings have a greater chance of keloid formation, a large, bumpy growth of scar tissue. You are more at risk if you already have any keloids, or if you are African-American or of Asian ancestry.
- ◆ Eyebrow piercings have a risk of nerve damage causing partial paralysis of the face.

Nipples

- ◆ Women that get an infection may have problems with future breast feeding.
- ◆ Piercings may take 3 - 6 months to heal.

Belly Button

- ◆ Clothing and elastic on clothing can irritate the piercing and increase healing time.
- ◆ There is greater risk of infection because it is harder to keep clean.
- ◆ Belly button piercings can take 4 months to 1 year to heal.

