



# FREEDOM PIERCING AFTERCARE

#2 - 3212 30th Ave. Vernon, BC, Canada, 250-558-FREE

As professionals interested in the good health of people, we take care of the piercings we do.

We have both researched and seen many of the complications that can arise.

By following our suggestions, your piercing(s) should heal in the time estimated by your piercer on the day it was done.

If your piercing doesn't feel or look right, contact us immediately. We can usually calm your worries by talking to you and possibly changing your routine slightly.

## Daily Cleaning:

**Always wash your hands** before you touch the piercing or the surrounding area.

**Clean your piercing two to three times daily.** First in the morning to start the day fresh and again at night. Your body does most of its healing while you sleep. Cleaning the piercing before and after you sleep will help it to heal quickly. If it looks like it should be cleaned again throughout the day, then do so. Remember to clean your piercing after strenuous physical activity.

**Clean off all dry matter from the jewelry before moving it.** The dried matter you find on the jewelry is a substance called lymph and is a normal part of the healing process. Nevertheless, when lymph dries, it is sharp and will scratch, reopen and hurt your piercing if turned inside. Remove the dry matter by dousing the piercing with clean, warm water and rinsing it off. Once the ring is clean of dry matter, you are ready to wash the piercing.

**Wash with saline (or use a soap with no cold cream, dye, or perfume)** and warm, clean water. Soaps we recommend for your piercing include Neutrogena, Allenbury's and Pears, (glycerin antibacterial soaps) Tea Tree Soap, Dr. Bonner's Baby Soap, TechniCare (3% chloroxyleneol), and sensitive skin soaps like Jergens Antibacterial or Soft Soap. Check with your piercer regarding which aftercare product best suits you. Do not medicate with products such as Bactroban or Baciguent. Antibiotic ointments are not necessary to successfully heal a piercing, and may in fact prolong the healing period.

**Using a Q-tip clean with saline or lather the soap on the area of the piercing** using a cotton swab, clean cloth or clean hands. You can always do this in the shower too. Wash the exposed ring and rinse. Turn the jewelry inside the piercing. The area which was inside the piercing is now exposed; clean this area with saline or soap and rinse.

**The piercing is best left alone**, clean and dry and given as much air as possible.  
**Do not touch!!!**

## What You Should Avoid:

### **Rubbing Alcohol and Hydrogen Peroxide.**

Alcohol is an inflammatory. You do not want to inflame your new piercing. Hydrogen peroxide is cytotoxic; it will kill the skin cells that your body needs to form scar tissue and heal your piercing.

**Neosporin and Polysporin.**

These two substances contain petroleum products, which are meant to waterproof surface cuts and will not break down in your body.

**Antibiotic Ointment** on genitals, septums, nostrils or near your eyes or inner lips.

Remember that antibiotic ointments are not necessary to successfully heal a piercing.

**Do Not Use Hibitane** (a pre-surgical scrub) on any piercing.

**Perfumed, Dyed, or Cream Soaps.**

It is difficult to determine if they contain substances which are harmful to your new piercing.

**Band-Aids.** These create a warm, wet, dark place for bacteria to thrive. That's right, a bacteria hotel.

**Make-up and Hair Products.****Well meaning people...**

who contradict the information given by **Freedom Body Piercing** staff and the information on this website.

**Sea Salt Soaks:**

Mix 1/2 teaspoon Non-Iodized Sea Salt with a 3/4 filled tea cup of purified water.

Soak navels, 40 minutes a day for a minimum of 3 weeks.

Soak nipples, 30 minutes a day for 10 days.

**Oral Piercings:**

Rinse the inside of your mouth with Non-Iodized Sea Salt 5 - 8 times a day, (mix 1/2 tsp to 500ml of water) an anti-bacterial mouthwash (e.g. Cepacol or Tea Tree Mouthwash) for 30 seconds no less than three times, and no more than five times each day. Problems may occur if you rinse with a strong anti-bacterial mouthwash too often. Excessive use of an anti-bacterial mouthwash will kill all the "good" bacteria in your mouth and lead to a condition called Thrush. Thrush is a yeast infection in your mouth and is characterized by a thick, white coating on your tongue and other surfaces of your mouth, and bad breath!

**Tongue Piercings:**

Sucking on ice cubes the first few days after your piercing will help to reduce swelling and will make it easier for you to eat. Cold items do help a bit (e.g. popsicles, freezies) but not as much as the simple ice cube.

You can make ice cubes out of tea for a soothing treat that is tasty and full of vitamins. If you're brewing your own, mix raspberry leaf (for vitamins), red clover (as a blood cleanser), peppermint (for fresh breath), and nettle (to boost your immune system when your food intake is low). There is no need to sweeten the tea because it becomes deliciously sweet as it freezes and the sugars crystallize. Chamomile tea is also excellent as it is a natural anti-inflammatory.

Remember to tighten your barbell beads before and after you eat and sleep. This way there is less chance of the barbell coming undone in your mouth. Please wash your hands first and mouthwash afterward.

Smoking, excessive talking, spicy foods, and oral contact (eg. kissing or oral sex) should be avoided during the healing period.

We will down-size your initial barbell to a more comfortable size once the swelling is completely gone. Please note that down-sizing is a service we provide to our clients and should be done as

soon as possible after the piercing (3 weeks). You must return to **Freedom Body Piercing** for down-sizing within the first month from the date of the piercing and the barbell must be in good condition, and free of scratches. A \$10 sterilization fee applies to jewelry down-sizing.

**Receipts are mandatory**

### **Lip and Labret Piercings:**

For the outside of the piercing, follow steps **1 - 5 for daily cleaning**.

For the inside, follow the instructions for **oral piercings**.

### **Cartilage, Facial, and Genital Piercings:**

Follow the steps for **daily cleaning**. These piercings will be easier to deal with using Q-tips and an antiseptic solution such as Bactine or Clinical Care. Q-tips and Saline are also suitable. Rinse well, this way soap is less likely to be left in the piercing, causing dryness or reactions.

**Do not use** antibiotic ointments or Hibitane (a concentrated antibacterial soap) on genitals, septums, nostrils, or near your eyes or inner lips. Keep make-up and hair products away from your piercings.

**No sexual contact** for at least the first three weeks! Use a condom or dental dam for the following three weeks. Both you and your partner are at a higher risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases with fresh piercings.

### **Infections:**

Your body initially treats a piercing as though it were a sliver. Your body's reaction to a sliver is called an inflammatory response. Some lymph discharge and a little redness is normal. If you think you are getting more than an inflammatory response call us at **Freedom Body Piercing!** or come in and talk to us...We will help.

Infections are the result of bacteria being introduced to the piercing by excessive handling, dirt and sweat. Dirty clothes or bedding can also be a problem. Always clean the piercing that's dirty or has been touched after dancing, exercise, or 8 hour shifts! If you have access to soap and water, basic hygiene and common sense, there is no reason to get an infected piercing.

A piercing can have certain symptoms of infection and not necessarily be one. It is common to confuse "inflammatory response" and "infection". Your piercing, being the most vulnerable area of your body, will respond to a low immune system, stress, PMS, hormone changes (e.g. going on or off the pill, pregnancy, lactation, falling in love or breaking up), excessive abuse, residues and the normal healing process by acting up. The area around the piercing may be a little sore or irritated and these symptoms will go away after a day or two. You can speed the healing process by taking an Epsom salt bath and by eating a healthy diet.

**The four signs of infection are:**

Heat

Swelling

Redness

Sensitivity

### **You can check for these signs of infection yourself.**

- To check for heat, place the back of the middle joint of your middle finger against the area for about two heartbeats.  
Check the surrounding area. The site of the infection will be noticeably hotter than the surrounding area.
- An infection has a lump in it called an abscess. This is pus which has not drained and is being held in the piercing. If there is no lump, there is no infection.
- A little redness around the entry and exit of the piercing is normal. If it is infected the whole area will be red and angry looking.
- If you can pinch behind the piercing and it doesn't really hurt (kill!) then it is not infected.

The first thing you should do is call **Freedom Body Piercing!** We can probably help you determine if you have an infection. If you do we will advise you to see a doctor. The next thing you should do is relax. Getting upset about a piercing can only make it worse. Any energy that you put into stress will not go into healing. A long hot Epsom salt bath will help to reduce stress and to draw out the infection. Be patient and clean the piercing carefully, without handling it with dirty hands. In our experience, most people tend to want to touch their piercing if it is bothering them or is sore. Your hands touch everything in your environment and are crawling with bacteria.

**Resist the urge to touch.**

### **Allergic Reactions:**

Not all problems with a new piercing will be infection related. Many people have allergies and in piercing we take that into consideration. The metals and products we recommend are chosen for their low rate of reaction, based on both experience and medical information. If you are pierced at **Freedom Body Piercing!** you will be wearing jewelry made of **316L Implant Grade Stainless Steel**, the same metal used in dental surgery and pins in your knee after a bad day at the ski hill.

A metal reaction will appear as though the skin around the entrance is pulling away from the jewelry. This is corrected simply by replacing the jewelry with another, comparable body jewelry.

Many reactions are caused by cleaning solutions. If you are sensitive to the cleaning solutions you are using, this is usually indicated by itching and burning upon application of the product and even the appearance of a rash of small bumps around the piercing.

A 30 minute Epsom salt soak should provide immediate relief and an alternative cleaning solution should be chosen. Regardless of the aftercare product you are using, it is important to rinse the piercing thoroughly with clean water after each cleaning. Allowing soap to remain on the piercing will inevitably cause irritation. If skin irritation problems persist any longer than a few days to a week, give us a call and we will suggest something else for you or be the ones to refer you to a doctor or clinic.

### **Additional Healing Help:**

The best way to heal any piercing is to treat your body right. This means eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep, and avoiding stress, drugs, and alcohol. In addition to the basic care you give the piercing, there are things you can do to aid in the healing.

- A 50 mg zinc supplement in your diet (one-a-day tablet) for the first week will significantly help the healing process. Vitamin C, Echinacea, Ginseng, and Garlic will also boost the immune system and will speed up the healing process. Ingesting Vitamin E toward the end of the healing period will aid the prevention of excess scarring.  
**Always be sure to take Vitamins on a full stomach.**
- Occasional warm water rinses over the piercing will soothe the area. If you find your piercing is sore during the first week of healing, take a cotton swab or paper towel dampened with hot water, rest it on the area and apply light pressure for two or three minutes.
- A good thing for any irritation you may have during the healing period is an Epsom salt bath. Soak in the bath with the water as hot as you can tolerate (15 minutes for relaxation, 30 minutes for allergic reactions or before permanent removal of the jewelry, 1 hour to interrupt the bacterial cycle of an infection). An essential oil of lavender is a great addition to any Epsom salt bath; it is a natural antibiotic, it smells great and it makes you feel oohhhh so relaxed!
- To soothe an angry piercing, prepare a compress by adding a few drops of pure essential lavender oil and a teaspoon of salt to a clean glass of hot water. Soak the piercing using cotton swabs or Q-tips for 15 to 30 minutes (even a few minutes will help). Immerse the piercing in the glass if possible (eg. navel).
- Keep your piercing clean and well ventilated. This means staying away from tight, constrictive clothing (navel piercings!)
- Don't touch your piercing with dirty hands. Yours or anyone else's!
- Never turn the jewelry with dry matter on it...always wash the area first.
- Do not cover, hide or protect the piercing with any type of bandage; just wear clean, loose clothing.
- No oral contact.
- Avoid rough play with the piercing during the initial healing period.
- Stay away from stress (and stressed people).
- Do not remove jewelry for any reason other than "I don't want it anymore". Even if it looks at all infected or is still healing, call us first.
- Do not forget to clean your piercing. Failure to keep your piercing clean is the #1 cause of infection.
- It's ok to continue with your favorite physical activities (e.g. gym, cycling, swimming etc.) with a new piercing, just be sure to clean your piercing thoroughly afterwards.
- Hot tubs and pools are OK as long as the body count doesn't max out the chlorine. Clean your piercing thoroughly afterwards.

## Migration and Rejection:

While uncommon, a piercing may migrate or reject. This is indicated by the two entrances to the piercing moving together. The piercing will become more shallow over a period of time and a line of scar tissue will extend from the site of the original piercing. If the jewelry is not removed, the piercing may reject entirely. While there are many causes of rejection and migration such as:

- inappropriate jewelry placement
- inappropriate jewelry
- hormone changes
- friction or pressure on the piercing
- injury to the piercing

the results are the same. Pay attention to your piercing. If it appears as though the jewelry has moved from its original position, come by and see us and we'll determine if

the piercing is in fact rejecting. We will remove the jewelry and schedule an appointment to re-pierce.

### **Keloid and Hypertrophic Scarring:**

The development of scar tissue through the length of the piercing is normal and must occur in order to successfully heal and maintain a piercing over the long term.

Excessive scarring usually consists of keloid or hypertrophic scarring. There is much debate in the medical community and in the professional piercing community regarding the cause and treatment of keloid and hypertrophic scarring and even the difference between the two! The two types of scar tissue can not be differentiated under a microscope. Our efforts therefore tend to focus on helping the client to eliminate the scar tissue while maintaining the piercing. Remember, we successfully help the majority of our clients to deal with this problem.

Keloid or hypertrophic scars usually appear as a red bump by the entrance to the piercing. Individuals with more melanin in their skin are more susceptible (i.e. Blacks, Asians). Some piercings are also more prone to excessive scarring (e.g. cartilage piercings because they involve multiple layers of tissue that heal at different rates; navel piercings because they are located in an area of the body which is often subjected to irritation).

If you have a red bump on your piercing, come in and see us and we'll offer some suggestions.

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