

BODY PIERCING AFTERCARE

CLEANING SOLUTIONS

- Packaged sterile saline is a great choice for piercing aftercare. Look for sterile saline labeled for use as a wound wash. The saline ingredients should be listed as .09% sodium chloride. Saline with pure hypochlorous acid is also an excellent option.
- If sterile saline is not available to you, a homemade sea salt solution mixture can be a good alternative. Dissolve 1/4 teaspoon of iodine free, fine grain sea salt into one cup (8 oz.) of warm distilled or bottled water. A stronger mixture is NOT better; salt solution that is too strong can irritate the piercing.

CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS

- **Wash** your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning or touching your piercing.
- **Wash** your piercing twice daily. Gently lather around the piercing and rinse as needed. Use only mild soap with no fragrance.
- **Dry** by gently patting with a clean or disposable towel.
- **Saline** rinse as needed during healing.

WHAT IS NORMAL?

- **Initially:** some bleeding, localized swelling, tenderness, or bruising. A heated compress can help soothe this.
- **During healing:** some discoloration, itching, and secretion of a whitish-yellow fluid may occur. Tissue may tighten around the jewelry as it heals. Follow cleaning instructions and do not force the jewelry to move.
- **Once healed:** Harmless but smelly crusts can form on your jewelry. To avoid this, continue to clean your piercing as part of your daily hygiene routine.
- A piercing may seem healed before the healing process is complete. This is because tissue heals from the outside in, and although it feels fine, the interior remains fragile. **Be patient and keep caring for your piercing during the entire healing period.**
- Even healed piercings can shrink or close in minutes after having been there for years! This varies from person to person, but if you like your piercing, keep jewelry in.

WHAT TO DO

DO: Wash your hands prior to touching the piercing; leave it alone except when cleaning.

DO: Make sure your bedding is washed and changed regularly. Wear clean, comfortable, breathable clothing that protects your piercing while you are sleeping.

DO: Showers tend to be safer than taking baths because bathtubs can harbor bacteria. If you bathe in a tub, clean it well before each use and rinse off your piercing when you get out.

DO: Leave jewelry in at all times. Even healed piercings that you have had for years can shrink or close in minutes! If removed, reinsertion can be difficult or impossible.

DO: A warm compress may be used to help with tenderness and facilitate healing.

DO: Maintain good health by drinking water, eating a balanced diet, and exercising.

DO: Contact your piercer if you need help or have any questions.

WHAT TO AVOID

DO NOT clean with alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, antibacterial soaps, iodine, or any harsh products. Avoid ointments because they prevent necessary air circulation.

DO NOT over-clean. This can delay your healing and irritate your piercing. A gentle cleansing twice daily is usually enough.

DO NOT allow trauma such as friction from clothing, excessive motion of the area, playing with the jewelry, and vigorous cleaning. These activities can cause the formation of scar tissue, migration, prolonged healing, and other complications.

DO NOT allow rough play, oral contact, or contact with others' bodily fluids while healing.

DO NOT consume excessive caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol products while healing.

DO NOT submerge the piercing in unhygienic bodies of water such as lakes, pools, and hot tubs. Protect your piercing using a waterproof wound sealant bandage when in these environments.

DO NOT use beauty care products on the piercing, including cosmetics, lotions, and sprays.

DO NOT hang charms or any object from your jewelry until the piercing is fully healed.

DO NOT sleep directly on a healing cartilage piercing. This can cause irritation and even **cause a shift in the piercing's angle**. Placing a travel pillow on top of your pillow, and then placing your ear in the opening, can be helpful to avoid this.