



## Aftercare Guidelines for Body Piercings

### Recommended Supply List:

1. Dr. Bronner's soap or alternative natural, fragrance free soap
2. Piercing Wash (*NeilMed*) **OR** Non-Iodized Sea Salt for salt soaks:
  - **RECIPE FOR SALT SOAKS:** dissolve 1/4 teaspoon of non-iodized (iodine-free) sea salt into one cup (8 oz.) of warm distilled or bottled water a stronger mixture is not better; a saline solution that is too strong can irritate the piercing
3. Ibuprofen (*to help alleviate swelling and tenderness/soreness for the first few days/week of the initial healing process*)

### CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS FOR BODY PIERCINGS:

- 1) Wash hands prior to cleaning or touching your piercing.
- 2) Use piercing wash if you purchased it/have it **OR** use salt soaks (*refer to supply list above for recipe*) for 5-10 minutes, anywhere from 1-3 times per day:
  - ✧ Invert a cup of warm saline solution over the area to form a vacuum (*it may be easier for certain areas to use clean gauze or paper towels that are saturated with saline solution*).
- 3) Rinse with water afterwards.
- 4) Use soap 1-2 times per day:
  - ✧ Lather up a pearl size drop of the soap to clean the jewelry and the piercing
  - ✧ Leave the cleanser on the piercing for 15-30 seconds
- 5) Rinse thoroughly to remove all traces of the soap from the piercing. **\*\*It is not necessary to rotate the jewelry through the piercing.\*\***
- 6) Dry by gently patting with clean paper towel.
  - ✧ We do not recommend cloth towels as they can harbor bacteria and also snag on jewelry, causing injury.

### WHAT TO EXPECT:

- You may experience some bleeding, localized swelling, tenderness or bruising.
- During the healing process some discoloration, itching, secretion of a whitish-yellow fluid/crust (not pus) may form on the jewelry.
- The tissue may tighten around the jewelry as it heals; this is normal...do not force it.
- If you fail to clean your piercing as instructed, smelly bodily secretions may accumulate.
- 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 cleaning throughout the entire healing period.*

### TIPS:

- ◆ Wash your hands prior to touching the piercing; leave it alone except when cleaning.
- ◆ Exercise during healing is fine but listen to your body.
- ◆ Make sure your bedding is washed and changed regularly.
- ◆ Wear clean, comfortable, breathable clothing that protects your piercing while you are sleeping.
- ◆ Showers tend to be safer than taking baths during the initial healing process, as 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.

### WHAT TO AVOID:

- Avoid cleaning with alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, Dial® or other harsh soaps as these can damage cells.
- Avoid using essential oils and other ointments on your piercing during the healing process.
- Avoid over-cleaning as this can delay your healing and irritate your piercing.
- Avoid undue trauma such as friction from clothing, excessive motion of the area, playing with the jewelry, and vigorous cleaning.
- Avoid all oral contact, rough play, and contact with others' bodily fluids on or near your piercing during healing.
- Avoid recreational drug use including excessive caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol.
- Avoid submerging the piercing in unhygienic bodies of water such as spas, lakes, pools, hot tubs, etc.
- Avoid all beauty and personal care products on or around the piercing including cosmetics, lotions and sprays.

**Unless there is a problem with the size, style, or material of the initial jewelry, leave it in the place for the entire healing period. See a qualified piercer to perform any jewelry change that becomes necessary during healing.**

- ✧ Contact your piercer if your jewelry must be removed (such as for a medical procedure).
- ✧ Leave jewelry in at all times. Even old or well-healed piercing can shrink or close in minutes even after having been there for years. If removed, re-insertion can be difficult or impossible.
- ✧ With clean hands or paper product, be sure to regularly check threaded ends on your jewelry for tightness ("righty-tighty, lefty-loosey").
- ✧ Should you decide you no longer want the piercing, simply remove the jewelry (or have a professional piercer remove it) and continue cleaning the piercing until the hole closes. In most cases, only a small mark will remain.
- ✧ In the event an infection is suspected, quality jewelry or an inert alternative should be left in place to allow for drainage or the infection. If the jewelry is removed, the surface cells can close up, which can seal the infection inside the piercing channel and result in an abscess.

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