

## Tips for Safe Piercing...

- **DO YOUR HOMEWORK!** Check out different studios and ask to see examples of the piercers' work. Make sure the piercer can answer all of your questions.
- **ALWAYS** use a professional piercer who operates out of a public shop or studio. This ensures that the studio is inspected by the local health unit.
- **ASK** about inspections by the local health unit.
- **LOOK** for an area that is clean and well organized!
- **LOOK** for a sink with hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- **Protect yourself** hepatitis and HIV/AIDS can be passed on by improperly sterilized or re-used needles.



*Algoma*  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
Santé publique Algoma

### Algoma Public Health

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## Algoma Public Health

... For Healthier Communities ...

Getting A  
Piercing?  
*Beauty & Body Art  
Safety*

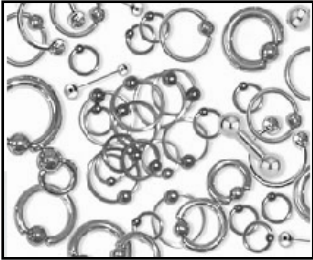


For more information contact:  
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(705) **759-5286**

## Getting Your Piercing ...

Before the piercer gets started, watch to see that they wash their hands with liquid soap and water, and then puts on a new pair of single-use disposable gloves.

Tell the artist if you have any allergies to pigments,



latex, iodine (antiseptics) etc. before they start the piercing procedure. Make sure the body area to be pierced is first cleaned with soap and water then wiped with an appropriate

skin antiseptic (i.e. 70% rubbing alcohol). This must be the last step just prior to piercing. Oral piercings require an appropriate oral rinse. The piercer must use a new, sterile, single-use disposable needle for each piercing. All sterilized piercing instruments and jewellery must be stored in sealed, sterile packaging and you should see the piercer open the package(s) in front of you as they get started. The sterile jewellery inserted into a new piercing must be made of high quality, non-allergenic materials such as gold, surgical steel, niobium, titanium or PTFE nylon.

Needles MUST be discarded into an approved SHARPS disposal container immediately after use.



## What to Look For...

- Either a sink or an ultrasonic cleaner must be available for cleaning of reusable instruments prior to sterilization.

- An approved sterilizer (e.g. autoclave or dry-heat sterilizer) must be present. Boiling water, UV light or hot bead processes are not approved means of sterilization because they will not kill all germs.

## Ear Piercing...

- Ear piercing guns must ONLY be used on the ear lobes! A piercing gun cannot be used to pierce any part of the body other than the fleshy lobe of the ear. The earring (e.g. stud) can cause damage to the ear cartilage or tissue in other body areas during the procedure.



Piercing gun

- All approved ear guns are equipped with sterile, single-use, disposable, plastic cartridges or adapters, protecting the gun from being contaminated by blood or body fluids during use.
- The earrings and disposable cartridge adapters must be stored in sealed sterile packages. The sterile packages should be opened in front of you and the earrings loaded onto the gun before getting started.

## Aftercare Tips:

- Ask about the follow-up care needed with your type of piercing. Your piercer should provide verbal and written instructions on how to clean and care for your piercing to help prevent an infection.

- Always wash your hands before cleaning your piercing or the surrounding area.
- Avoid touching the area, except for cleaning, until it is healed. Keeping it dry and clean is the key to healing.

## See Your Doctor Immediately If...

- The pierced area becomes infected (e.g. increased redness, swelling, tenderness, pus).
- Removal of the jewellery is not usually recommended because the tissue will close over the infection, limiting access to the site for care.



## Play it Safe! Don't get pierced if...

- A piercer can't or won't answer all of your questions.
- A piercer does not use pre-packaged, sterile, single-use disposable needles.
- A piercer does not use proper cleaning and sterilization methods.
- The piercer appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Alcohol and drugs may impair their judgment and coordination and you'll pay the penalty for any mistakes they make!
- You have taken drugs or alcohol. Alcohol or drugs may thin your blood and this may lead to excessive bleeding.

**Anytime you pierce the skin with a needle, there is a chance of infection (such as Hepatitis or HIV/AIDS) or an allergic reaction.**

**Be a smart consumer and get it done with the lowest amount of risk.**