

**\*\*This set of Aftercare Instructions taken from the Association of Professional Piercers web site: <http://www.safepiercing.org/>**

## **CLEANING SOLUTIONS**

Use either one or both of the following solutions for body piercing:

- Packaged sterile saline solution\* with no additives (read the label!) or non-iodized sea salt mixture: Dissolve 1/8 - 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! Saline solution that is too strong can irritate the piercing.
- Liquid anti-microbial or germicidal soap.\*

## **CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS**

- 1) WASH your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning, or touching on or near your piercing for any reason.
- 2) SALINE soak at least two to three times daily. Simply invert a cup of warm saline solution over the area to form a vacuum for a few minutes. The longer you soak, the better. For certain placements it may be easier to apply using fresh gauze or a cotton ball saturated with saline solution. A brief rinse will remove any residue.
- 3) SOAP no more than once or twice a day. While showering, lather up a pearl size drop of the soap to clean the jewelry and the piercing. Leave the cleanser on the piercing no more than thirty seconds, then rinse thoroughly to remove all traces of the soap from the piercing.
- 4) DRY with disposable paper products such as gauze or tissues, because cloth towels can harbor bacteria and catch on new piercings causing injury. Pat gently to avoid trauma.

## **WHAT IS NORMAL**

- Initially: some bleeding, localized swelling, tenderness, or bruising.
- During healing: some discoloration, itching, secretion of a whitish-yellow fluid (not pus) that will form some crust on the jewelry. The tissue may tighten around the jewelry as it heals.
- Once healed: the jewelry may not move freely in the piercing; DO NOT force it. If you fail to include cleaning your piercing as a part of your daily hygiene routine, normal but smelly bodily secretions may accumulate.

- A piercing may seem healed before healing is complete. This is because piercings heal from the outside in, and although it feels healed the tissue remains fragile on the inside. BE PATIENT, and keep cleaning throughout 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; if you like your piercing, leave the jewelry in place.

## **WHAT TO DO**

- Wash your hands prior to touching the piercing; leave it alone except when cleaning. It is not necessary to rotate the jewelry while healing except possibly during cleaning.

- Stay healthy. Get enough sleep and eat a nutritious diet. The healthier your lifestyle, the easier it will be for your piercing to heal. Exercise during healing is fine, just “listen” to your body.

- Make sure your bedding is kept clean and changed regularly. Wear clean, comfortable breathable clothing that protects your piercing while sleeping.

- Showering is safer than taking a bath, because bathtubs tend to harbor bacteria. If you would like to take a bath, clean the tub well before each use.

## **WHAT TO AVOID**

- Avoid undue 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 unsightly and uncomfortable scar tissue, migration, prolonged healing, and other complications.

- Avoid the use of alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, Betadine, Hibiclens or ointment.

- Avoid over cleaning. This can delay your healing and irritate your piercing.

- Avoid all oral contact, rough play, and contact with others' bodily fluids on or near your piercing during healing.

- Avoid stress and recreational drug use including excessive caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol.

- Avoid submerging the piercing in bodies of water such as lakes, pools, jacuzzis, etc. Or protect your piercing using a special waterproof bandage\* such as Tegaderm, which is available at drugstores.

- Avoid all beauty and personal care products on or around the piercing including cosmetics, lotions, and sprays, etc.
- Don't hang charms or any object from your jewelry until the piercing is fully healed.

## **HINTS AND TIPS**

### *Jewelry*

- Unless there is a problem with the size, style, or material of the initial jewelry, leave it in place for the entire healing period. A qualified piercer should perform any necessary jewelry change that occurs during healing. See APP website for "Picking your Piercer" brochure.
- Contact your piercer if your jewelry must be temporarily removed (such as for a medical procedure). There are non-metallic jewelry alternatives.
- Leave jewelry in at all times. Even old, well-healed piercings can shrink or close in minutes 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").
- Carry a clean spare ball in case of loss or breakage.
- Should you decide you no longer want the piercing, seek professional help in the removal of the jewelry and continue cleaning the piercing until the hole closes. In most cases only a small indentation will remain.
- In the event that an infection is suspected, quality jewelry or an inert alternative should be left in place to allow for drainage of the infection. Should the jewelry be removed, the surface cells can closeup sealing the infection inside the piercing channel, resulting in an abscess. Until such time an infection is cleared up, leave quality jewelry in!

## **For Particular Areas**

### *Navel*

- A hard, vented eye patch (sold at pharmacies) can be applied under tight clothing (such as nylon stockings) or secured using a length of ace bandage around the body (to avoid irritation from adhesive). This can protect the area from restrictive clothing, excess irritation, and impact during physical activities such as contact sports.

### *Ear/Ear Cartilage and Facial*

- Use the t-shirt trick: dress your pillow in a large, clean t-shirt and turn it nightly; one clean t-shirt provides four clean surfaces for sleeping.
- Maintain cleanliness of telephones, headphones, eyeglasses, helmets, hats and anything that contacts the pierced area.
- Use caution when styling your hair and advise your stylist of a new or healing piercing.

### *Nipple*

- The support of a tight cotton shirt or sports bra may provide protection and feel comfortable, especially for sleeping.

### *Genital*

- In most cases you can engage in sexual activity as soon as you feel ready. Comfort and hygiene are vital.
- During healing all sexual activities must be gentle. To increase comfort and decrease trauma, soak in warm saline solution or plain water to remove any crusty matter, prior to sexual activity.
- Use barriers such as condoms, dental dams, and Tegaderm, etc.\* to avoid contact with a partner's bodily fluids, even in long-term relationships.
- Use clean, disposable barriers on sex toys.
- Wash hands before touching on or near the piercing.
- Use a new container of water based lubricant.\* Do not use your own saliva as a lubricant.
- After sex, an additional saline soak or clean water rinse is suggested.
- Prince Albert and Apadravyapiercings can bleed freely for the first few days.

- If using soap, urinate after cleaning any piercing that is near the urethra. Each body is unique and healing times vary considerably. If you have any questions, please contact your piercer.

## **DISCLAIMER**

These guidelines are based on a combination of vast professional experience, common sense, research and extensive clinical practice. This is not to be considered a substitute for medical advice from a doctor. If you suspect an infection, seek medical attention. Keep in mind that the removal of jewelry can lead to further complications. Be aware that many doctors have not received specific training regarding piercing. Your local piercer may be able to refer you to a piercing friendly medical professional. See the APP Brochure "Troubleshooting For You And Your Healthcare Professional"

\*Consult your piercer, see Suggested Products below, or call (888) 888-1APP for current suggested products. This will allow us to keep current as advances are made in the field.

The use this information does not imply the piercer and/or company is an APPmember.

### *\*Suggested Products*

-Saline Solution: .9% sterile isotonic solution of "normal saline" or prepared saline

-Liquid anti-microbial or germicidal soap for cleaning: Provon or Satin or other fragrance free mild anti-microbial soap

-Waterproof bandage: Tegaderm, CleanSeals, Polyskin or other breathable, non-water permeable wound sealant bandage