

# a lesson in body art!

from tattoos to piercings....  
what you need to know

## Is it *really* for me?

There are lots of reasons people get tattoos – they want to be trendy, they want to impress friends/boyfriend/girlfriend, they want to be sexy, they want to look tough – or maybe there is a deeper more personal meaning. The bottom line is body art – more specifically a tattoo is something that, even when removed by laser, will be with you for the rest of your life. Before you make this kind of commitment, spend more than just a few minutes thinking about how you will feel about it a year, five years even fifty years down the road. Hummmmm.....

Let me make a suggestion....try something temporary for a while. Is it a tattoo you're after?? Try a temp, or henna. Henna tattoos are cutting edge, painless and most important will disappear in 1-4 weeks. This is a great way to try out a tattoo without making a life time commitment. So it's a piercing you want? Clip on rings are made for just about every part of the body. You get the look sans the pain, after care and scaring (if you decide to let it grow back).

So let's say you've done the responsible thing. You've tried temporary, you've fallen in love and you are 100% sure this body art is for you. What now? Well the next step is to pick the place. Trust me when I tell you that a friend with a needle and a cube of ice is not the way to go. If you are adamant about avoiding Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV&AIDS plus countless other viruses, germs and bacteria that can cause infections....I suggest you take this next section very seriously.

- ☑ First and foremost make sure you choose a LICENCED facility in the United States. They should be licensed through the Texas Department of State Health Services.
- ☑ The facility should be neat and clean in appearance and smell.
- ☑ All needles and tattoo inks should be BRAND NEW and STERILE. A reputable artist will open sterilized needles and inks in front of you.
- ☑ Prior to getting your body art, talk to others who have used that artist about why they choose the person they did weather they still like their body art and problems they may have had that could be discussed with the artist

## A few suggestions:

- ☑ Ask about the qualifications of the artist
- ☑ Don't alter your mental state (alcohol or drugs) before going to get your tattoo. You may be more willing to take unwanted chances and you may not be fully aware of unhealthy or inappropriate conditions. A reputable facility will not allow you to receive body art under the influence as mandated by Texas law.
- ☑ Take a friend with you for support. Very few types of body art are pain free to receive.

So it's a done deal. You're there, it's about to happen what now?

- ☑ It can't be emphasized enough....Make SURE the needles and tattoo ink are brand new and sterile.
- ☑ The area receiving the art should be thoroughly disinfected and cleaned.
- ☑ Make sure the artist reviews all possible risks and complications before any work is done
- ☑ Ask any questions you have. If the artist or person you are talking to is hesitant or unwilling to answer them – GET OUT. There is a good chance the artist or facility is not in compliance with important safety standards

**Ahhhhhhh. It's finally done. Now you have to take care of it!**

- Your artist is required by law to provide you with aftercare instructions.**
- The area should stay clean and dry until completely healed.**
- Apply a topical antibiotic and /or antibacterial cleanser to the site as directed.**
- Monitor the site for any sign of infection or problems.**

**Last but not least.....**

- Cover tattoos with sunscreen to avoid fading of the ink.**
- Make sure you choose appropriate size jewelry for the particular piercing you have – jewelry that is too heavy can cause stretching or tearing of the pierced area.**
- Jewelry for new piercings should be surgical steel or other implant quality material.**

**Good Luck and remember the risks -  
Health First!!!**