Tattoo Infection

- To reduce the risk of infection from body tattoos, make sure you understand the procedure, obtain the tattoo from a licensed commercial studio that uses sterile procedures and follow the after-care instructions about cleaning and maintenance.
- Wash your hands prior to working on your tattoo.
- Wash your tattoo area with warm soap and water twice a day. You may use antimicrobial soap.
- Repeat the washing until the tattoo appears dry or not weeping.
- Do not use harsh or rough material on the tattoo until it is healed.
- When finished washing, pat dry with a soft cloth. Do not rub dry.
- Allow the tattoo to air dry for at least 10 minutes.
- Apply Bacitracin®, Neosporin®, or triple antibiotic ointment lightly after each washing or as directed.
- Avoid sun exposure until the tattoo is healed, or cover the tattoo with loose clothing, or use Sunblock spf 45 applied frequently.
- Do not soak tattoo, while bathing or swimming, until it is healed. Avoid work out exercises that make you sweat heavily.
- During healing the tattoo may itch. Avoid scratching or picking at the tattoo. You may use over the counter antihistamines such as Benadryl® (diphenhydramine) in the dosage recommended on package. If this medicine makes you sleepy then take it at bedtime. Application of more lotion and applying it more frequently may also help relieve the itching.
- If your caregiver has prescribed antibiotics (a medication which kills germs), take your medicine as directed. Take it for the entire length of time it was prescribed, even if the wound appears to be doing well.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF:

- There is increased swelling around, or increased pain in the tattooed area.
- There is increasing *inflammation* (redness) around the tattoo.
- There is an increase in the amount of drainage coming from the tattoo.
- There is a pus-like drainage from the tattoo.
- An unexplained oral temperature above 102º F (38.9º C) develops.

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