Piercing Infection

Even though antiseptic technique has greatly improved over the past several years, body piercings can easily become infected if they are not cared for properly. The following instructions will help you avoid an infection caused by a body piercing.

- Always wash your hands prior to working on your piercing.
- Wash your pierced area gently with warm soap and water six to eight times per day.
- Repeat the washing until the piercing does not have dried drainage or crusting around it.
- Do not use abrasive or rough material on the pierced area until it is healed.
- When finished washing, pat dry with a soft cloth. Do not rub dry.
- Apply antibiotic ointment lightly after each washing, or as directed. Move the jewelry back and forth in the piercing so some of the ointment will be worked into the piercing.
- Do not soak pierced part, as in bathing or swimming, until it is healed. Avoid work out exercises that make you sweat heavily.
- During healing the pierced area may itch. Avoid itching or picking at the piercing. You may use over the counter antihistamines in a dosage recommended on the package.
- If your caregiver has prescribed *antibiotics* (a medication which kills germs), take your medication as directed. Take it for the entire length of time it was prescribed, even if the piercing wound appears to be doing well.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF :

- There is increased swelling around, or increased pain in the pierced area.
- There is increasing *inflammation* (redness) around the pierced area.
- There is an increase in the amount of drainage coming from the piercing.
- You develop a fever of 100.4 ° F (38 ° C) or higher.

Document Released: 11/09/2005 Document Re-Released: 04/05/2010
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