

EAR PIERCING AND NOSE PIERCING WITH HAND-HELD DEVICES

Ear piercing with a hand-held device is the perforation or piercing of a client's ear using an ear piercing device. Ear piercing devices use an earring stud to pierce the earlobe, in contrast to other types of body piercing which are performed with the aid of a piercing needle.

Nose piercing with a hand-held device is the perforation or piercing of a client's nose using a nose piercing device. Nose piercing devices are not to be used on any part of the body except the fleshy part of the nose.

INFECTION RISKS

Microorganisms can enter the body at the piercing site and cause an infection. The result may be localized skin or tissue infections or more serious invasive infections. Infections can spread from:

- Contaminated and/or improperly reprocessed equipment (e.g., piercing device)
- Ears and nose piercing devices used on parts of the body other than the earlobes and nose
- Client's own bacteria on the skin
- Unclean hands touching the treated area

INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL REQUIREMENTS

Equipment

- Ear piercing devices are only to be used on earlobes; nose piercing are only to be used on the fleshy part of the nose. These devices are not to be used on other parts of the body
- Ear and nose piercing devices that do not have sterile, single-use disposable plastic cartridges or adaptors (i.e., those that directly contact a client's ears and nose) are not recommended
- Ear and nose piercing devices should be cleaned in a reprocessing sink and then disinfected by fully immersing the instrument in an intermediate disinfectant for the required contact time (e.g., 70% isopropyl alcohol for 10 minutes), in between clients
- Ear and nose piercing devices that cannot be immersed in liquid, as per manufacturer's instructions for use, must be cleaned and disinfected through other methods
 - If wipes are used for cleaning and disinfection, one wipe must be used to clean the device, and a second for disinfection, ensuring that the required contact time is reached
- Ears and nose piercing devices that cannot be disinfected or sterilized are not to be used

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- Nose piercing devices using disposable covers, protect the device from blood and/or body fluids
 - If disposable covers are not provided, the device must be immersed in intermediate level disinfectant solution for the required contact time
- All sterile items (i.e., piercing cartridges, stud adaptors, clasp retainers, piercing jewellery) are to be kept as sterile until the point of use. Ensure sterile items have lot numbers and expiry dates from the manufacturer. Do not use needles if there are no expiry dates and lot numbers
- Do not spray antiseptic solutions on sterile items before piercing
- Sterile items are not to be used once packaging is opened (i.e., if a single earring of a pair is used, the second earring is to be given to the client or discarded, and is not to be reused for piercing)

Note: Ear cartilage piercing is permitted using a piercing device **only** if the manufacturer’s instructions for use clearly states it and **only** if the following are met:

- Operator must have the manufacturer’s instructions for use available for their ear piercing device on-site; have a policy and procedure that indicate that training is required by staff that perform cartilage piercing; maintain appropriate records

Operational Requirements

- Earlobe and nose piercing with a hand-held device is not to be performed on a client if nearby skin (within 15 cm/6 inches) has a rash or is inflamed or infected. Where this cannot be achieved, service must be delayed until the area has healed
- Perform hand hygiene before performing a piercing
- Clean the front and back of the earlobe/nose with an approved skin antiseptic
- Mark the earlobe/nose with an aseptic technique to prevent contamination of the marker
 - An antiseptic technique can be the use of a toothpick that has been stained with the marker or use a single-use marker, both of which are to be discarded after each use
 - If using a reusable marker, the ear must be cleaned as in previous step, marked and allowed to dry, then cleaned again
- Clients are to be provided with verbal and written aftercare information following the piercing, including a recommendation to see a doctor within 24 hours if any signs of infection develop

Reprocessing Classification

Sterilization	Intermediate Level Disinfection	Low-Level Disinfection	Single-Use, Disposable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear and nose piercing hand-held devices that come into direct contact with a client’s ear/nose (not recommended) • Jewellery used for piercing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ear and nose piercing devices used to hold single-use, sterile disposable cartridges or stud adaptors and clasp retainers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables, chairs, beds • Rigid containers used to hold dirty equipment until reprocessing (at end of day) • Service trays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cartridges* • Marking pen or toothpick • Opened piercing jewellery • Opened unpackaged jewellery* • Gloves • Single-use stud holder* • Single-use clasp retainer* • Swab used to apply skin antiseptic

*These items are to be sterile before use (packaged sterile or sterilized on-site)

SOURCES

1. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Guide to infection prevention and control in personal service settings. 3rd ed. Toronto, ON: Queen’s Printer for Ontario; 2019

This fact sheet was adapted with permission from CIPHI Ontario and is based on PSS best practice recommendations, current reprocessing standards and legislation. It is not an inclusive list of all requirements. Operators are responsible to ensure that all services are offered according to local requirements, best practices and legislation.