

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 using 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 and nose piercing devices are not intended to be used on other parts of the body
- Ear piercing devices are intended to be used only on earlobes
- Nose piercing devices are only to be used on the fleshy part of the nose
- 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 and disinfected by fully immersing the instrument in an intermediate-level disinfectant for the required contact time (e.g., 70% isopropyl alcohol for 10 minutes), between each client
- 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 wipe for disinfection. Ensure 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 with 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
- Record the lot number and expiry date for pre-packaged sterile items. 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)

Operational Requirements

- The service provider checks the client's skin for open cuts, wounds, and signs of infection. If found, service is refused
- 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

High-level/Sterilization	Intermediate Level Disinfection	Low-Level Disinfection	Single-Use, Disposable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand-held nose piercing devices where any portion of a piercing device enters a client's nose • 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 (where no part of the device will touch the ear or mucous membrane) 	<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 • Plastic sleeve

*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.