



## ***Tattoos and Piercing***

**...Protecting yourself from AIDS hepatitis B and hepatitis C**

**Québec** 



***Things to Know***

# Tattoos and piercing

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*They can be great but remember that when you get tattoos or piercing, they last a lifetime. They can also cause health problems if they are not done with adequate care and in appropriate places on the body. If you are under 14 years old, you will need your parents' permission.*

*If you're sure about it, read this... just so you'll know what to do avoid catching hepatitis B, hepatitis C or AIDS.*

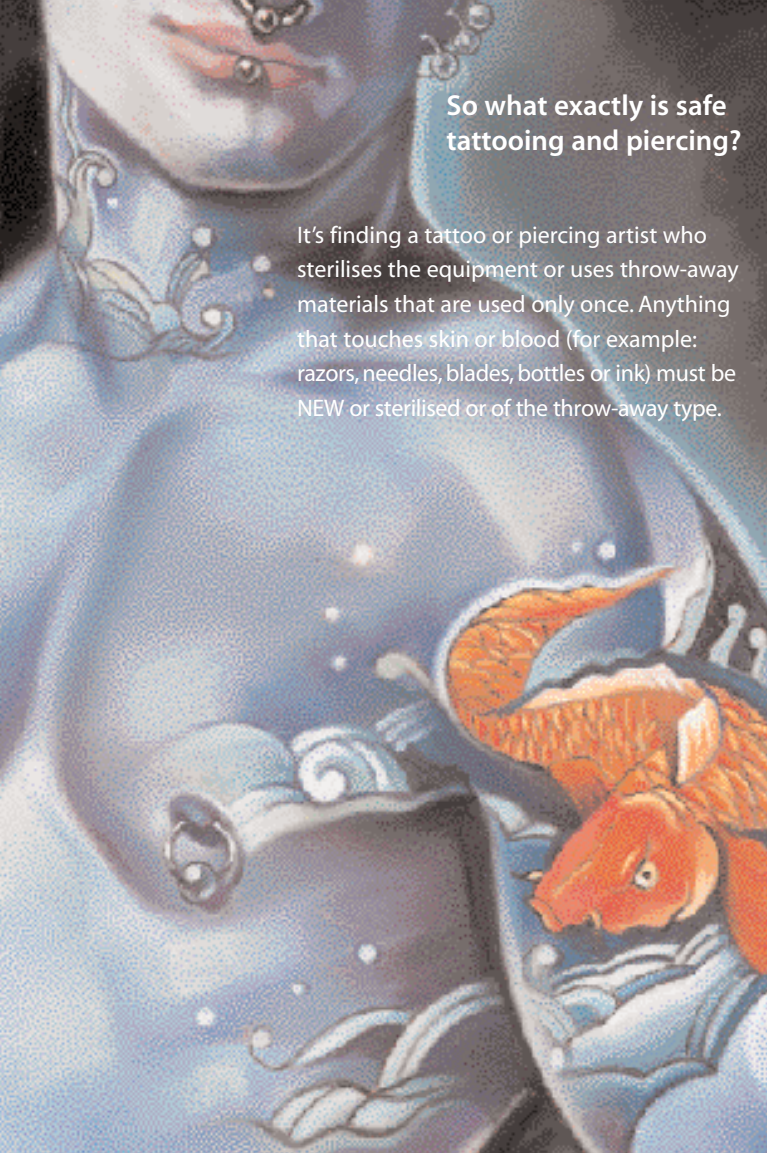
*You can get vaccinated against hepatitis B **before getting tattooed or pierced**, but there are no vaccines against AIDS or hepatitis C.*

## **Tattoos and piercing can be pretty cool. But if you want things to stay cool, remember:**

All the equipment used for tattooing and piercing must be sterilised.

If that's not possible, it should at least be disinfected.

Any equipment that has been used before (like stud guns or punches, needles, jewellery, or even guitar strings, wires, threads and ink) may be contaminated if the person tattooed or pierced before you was infected with the AIDS virus or hepatitis B or C. As a result, you can become infected too, especially with hepatitis B or C.



## So what exactly is safe tattooing and piercing?

It's finding a tattoo or piercing artist who sterilises the equipment or uses throw-away materials that are used only once. Anything that touches skin or blood (for example: razors, needles, blades, bottles or ink) must be NEW or sterilised or of the throw-away type.

## Hepatitis B, hepatitis C and AIDS... you really don't want to take any chances!

Maybe you're tired of hearing about them,  
but that won't change the facts:

● These are three very serious infections that spread mainly through blood (sharing needles or injection equipment) and having sex without condoms;

● You can't tell if someone is infected just by looking at him or her;

● It's possible to get safe tattooing and piercing.



## ***Sterile Needles***

***It's best to use new needles and to throw them away after use.***

Otherwise, they should be scrubbed clean and rinsed with water and:

• Sterilised in an autoclave (a sterilising machine that all professional tattooers should have);

• They can also be placed in an electric oven at 170°C for an hour, disinfected by putting them in pure bleach for 5 minutes or by boiling them in water for 20 minutes. The needles won't be as safe as sterile ones but it's better than nothing.



## ***Disinfecting the tattoo machine or the punch and the needle's tubes***

*The tattoo machine or the punch must be completely cleaned with bleach (tip and tube).*





## ***Washing hands and wearing latex gloves***

● Make sure the person who does your tattoo or piercing is wearing new latex gloves.

● Also, make sure that person washes his hands before and after the procedure even if he wore latex gloves.



## ***New ink only***

● Never use ink that has been used for someone else.

● Never put leftover ink back in the bottle.

● Only use capsules that will be thrown out after they are used.

***When the tattooing or piercing is finished, put a compress (sterile bandage) on the area for a few hours to keep it from getting infected.***



If you have questions about hepatitis B, hepatitis C or AIDS, or if you want a test or wish to be vaccinated against hepatitis B, ***call "Info-Santé" at your CLSC.***

