

## Consumer's Bill of Rights

Consumers of services offered by professionals authorized to practice by the Oregon Health Licensing Agency (OHLA) have a legal right to:

- ✦ Receive competent professional services
- ✦ Verify the names, titles and credentials of professionals who are providing services
- ✦ Receive clear explanations of the services offered and cost for the services
- ✦ Refuse any services offered
- ✦ Receive information on complaints that have resulted in final action
- ✦ File a complaint with OHLA regarding a practitioner, facility, or an unlicensed/uncertified person
- ✦ Request reasonable accommodations to access professional services as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act
- ✦ Be treated with courtesy and respect
- ✦ Have service options and consequences explained

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OHLA\_Piercing\_Thoughts\_Safety\_07\_09

## Piercing Thoughts



# PIERCING & TATTOO SAFETY



OREGON HEALTH LICENSING AGENCY (OHLA)

**F**rom pro basketball players to rock stars, it seems like everyone has a tattoo or body piercing.

If you're thinking of getting a piercing or tattoo, we have a few thoughts we'd like to share with you.

- ✦ Body piercing and tattooing are regulated in Oregon.
- ✦ Body piercing technicians and tattoo artists must be registered/licensed.
- ✦ They must work in licensed facilities.

**Tattooing anyone under 18 prohibited.**



✦ Body piercing technicians and tattoo artists must follow stringent safety and infection control standards.

✦ Body piercing facilities must post a public notice that states: "As with any invasive procedure, body piercing may involve possible health risks. Body piercing could result in: pain, bleeding, swelling, infection, scarring of the pierced area and nerve damage."

- ✦ Piercing on a person under 18 years of age is prohibited **unless written parental consent is submitted in person** to the facility. Parent or legal guardian must present current government issued photographic identification at time of written consent.
- ✦ Genital or nipple piercing and tattooing **is prohibited regardless of parental consent on those under age 18.**

## Piercing Thoughts

The **Piercing Thoughts** public education campaign was thought up by the **Oregon Health Licensing Agency (OHLA)**, a state consumer protection agency.

We'd like to hear from you! Let us know if you need more information or additional campaign materials, including what you need to know about aftercare.

**Piercing anyone under 18 prohibited without parental consent.**

### Contact us

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# Think Before You Ink

Sure, getting a tattoo or body piercing may be a creative way to express yourself. But be sure to think about a few things before you take the tattoo or piercing plunge.

- ☞ Will you still want the tattoo in the future? Or is this just a momentary whim that you'll regret later?
- ☞ Even though laser techniques have improved, it's still expensive to remove tattoos after the fact.
- ☞ There's always the chance of infection, either when you are getting your tattoo or piercing or when you don't

Is a tattoo or body piercing right for me? Hmm...

properly take care of the tattoo or piercing afterwards during the healing process.



- ☞ Are you getting a tattoo or piercing for *yourself*, or because everyone else has one?
- ☞ Will you take care of your tattoo or piercing during the healing process to prevent complications such as infections?



## What to Think

### Body Piercing

- ☞ A piercing gun may be used only on the ear lobe, **not** on any other part of the body, including ear cartilage.
- ☞ All piercing instruments that have or may come into direct contact with skin or be exposed to blood or bodily fluids **must** be sterilized.
- ☞ Piercing needles **must** be single-use, sterilized and prepackaged, then thrown away after each use into a biohazard container.
- ☞ **Personal jewelry is prohibited** for initial piercing. Jewelry provided by the facility must be pre-sterilized.

### What to Think About: In General

- ☞ The shop and practitioners **must** be licensed/registered with the state. Facility licenses should be posted in plain view. The facility should be clean — use your best judgment.
- ☞ Practitioners **must** wash their hands (bar soap prohibited) before each procedure and wear sterile, disposable gloves during the procedure.
- ☞ Practitioners **must** clean the area to be pierced or tattooed with a germicidal solution.
- ☞ Facilities **must** provide written information regarding possible reactions, side effects and potential complications of the tattooing or piercing process. Facilities must also provide aftercare instructions. (See OHLA's brochure, *Piercing & Tattoo Aftercare*.)
- ☞ After the procedure is completed, you've just begun: be sure to follow aftercare tips.



## What to Think

### Tattooing

- ☞ Tattoo needles **must** be single-use, sterilized and prepackaged, then thrown away after each use into a biohazard container; or sterilized in an autoclave or other approved device.
- ☞ Other instruments and surfaces that are not disposable **must** be cleaned and disinfected or cleaned and sterilized.
- ☞ Leftover tattoo ink **must** be disposed of after each procedure.
- ☞ Excess ink, and the small amount of blood that oozes from the skin puncture, should be continuously removed by dabbing with an absorbent, clean tissue.



# NOW EAR THIS!

A common bacteria, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, infected the ears of an estimated 25 people in 2000 who were pierced at the same Klamath Falls jewelry kiosk.

Four of them required surgery and several have disfigured ears as a result. *The culprit*: a contaminated spray bottle.

Oregon researchers, in findings published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, found that piercing cartilage is more prone to serious infection than piercing in soft tissue, such as the ear lobe.

Hmmm...I'll be more careful with cartilage.



Cartilage infections are difficult to treat, partly because of poor blood flow to the area.

### Hack Jobs & Horror Stories?

If you have negative experience with a piercing or tattoo, we want to know. We investigate consumer complaints and can take action against licensees for violations of state safety and infection control standards.

OHLA Regulatory Operations:

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