What To Know About Getting a Piercing

Any piercing can be a very dangerous procedure if not done properly in a safe, clean environment by a trained professional. The responsibility lies upon you to research and ask questions about your body piercer and your specific body piercing. Some of the risks can include but are not limited to:

Bloodborne diseases. If the equipment used to do your piercing is contaminated with the blood of an infected person, you can contract a number of serious bloodborne diseases. These include hepatitis C, hepatitis B, tetanus and HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Allergic reactions. Some piercing jewelry is made of nickel or brass, which can cause allergic reactions.

Oral complications. Jewelry worn in tongue piercings can chip and crack your teeth and damage your gums. Also, tongue swelling after a new piercing can block the throat and airway.

Skin infections. Piercings may cause redness, swelling, pain and a pus-like discharge.

Scars and keloids. Body piercing can cause scars and keloids (ridged, raised areas caused by an overgrowth of scar tissue).

Tearing or trauma. Jewelry can get caught and torn out accidentally. Trauma to a piercing may require surgery or stitches to repair. If not repaired, the damaged area may develop permanent scars or deformity.

Ask your body art professional about their Bloodborne Pathogen Training, the establishment's proficiency requirements, and the establishment's autoclave monthly spore test results.

Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois • P.O. 5210323 5M 9/09 IOCI 0175-10

State of Illinois
Illinois Department of Public Health

If you have any comments, complaints or questions, please contact:
Illinois Department of Public Health • Division of Food, Drugs and Dairies
525 W. Jefferson St. • Springfield, IL 62761 • 217-785-2439