



Body piercing operators in New South Wales must be registered with their local council and comply with current legislation.

Unregistered body piercers may charge less than other body piercers but they may not take such a professional approach, and the risk of infection may be greater.

Body piercers must have the consent of a parent, either in person or in writing, before they can perform body piercing on a child under the age of 16. It is an offence to pierce any part of a child's genitalia or nipples with or without the consent of a parent.

You may have to visit a few body piercing studios to find an operator who you feel confident will perform the piercing safely and who understands the look you are after. Once you get your piercing executed to perfection, you will thank yourself for taking the time to choose a body piercing operator who you were happy with.

For more information on choosing a body piercer, current legislation or to check if they are registered, please contact your local council.



The Hunter Regional Health Education Committee consists of representatives from all Hunter and Central Coast councils and the Central Coast Area Health Service, which combine to produce public and environmental health educational materials for the benefit of their communities.

Further information and fact sheets on body decoration and grooming including Body Piercing can be found at:
http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/PublicHealth/environment/general/body_grooming.asp

Choosing a Body Piercer



This information is provided by the Hunter Region Health Education Committee in the interests of community health and safety



Looking to choose someone to undertake your body piercing is a big decision to make.

Taking a minute or two to look around you, and asking a few questions can make the experience of getting body piercing a safe and rewarding one.

So what are the risks?

Besides the risk of not getting the look you were after, there is also the risk of contracting disease or infections.

The process of body art penetrates the skin and draws blood which means that when it is not done safely, you can risk:

- Flare up of existing eczema;
- Keloids (thick scars on dark skin);
- Nerve damage;
- Allergic reaction to metal;
- Bacterial infections like Staphylococcus Aureus and Pseudomonas; and
- More serious blood borne diseases like Hepatitis B, C, Tetanus or HIV.

Infections can also occur where:

- Materials that come into contact with clients are not clean or are not handled and used hygienically;
- Proper operator hygiene is not observed; and



- The structural facilities, furnishings and fitting of the premises are not kept clean and in good repair.

What should you look out for?

The shop and especially the work area should be clean and tidy; this is a good indication of the general work practices of an operator.

The equipment used should be clean and stored in clean containers.

The staff must wash their hands with warm water, soap and dry them with disposable towel before and after every client.

Treatment areas should be cleaned between each client and/or place a clean cover over the treatment surface.

Body piercers must wear new disposable gloves and a splatter proof apron to protect them and you.

Ear piercing guns should only be used to pierce ears and no other part of the body.

All jewellery and adornments should be stored in an unopened sterile package and be opened in front of the client.

Use by dates of antiseptics should be checked. Any skin penetration surfaces must be cleaned with a skin antiseptic before penetration.



Questions to ask yourself... or the operator

Is the equipment which pierces the skin single use (disposable) or reused - in which case it must have been sterilised before being used on you?

How is the equipment sterilised?

Autoclaves and Dry Heat are the only acceptable methods of sterilising – the following do not sterilise: boiling, pasteurisation, disinfectants, pressure cookers, microwave ovens, ultraviolet cabinets and ultrasonic cleaners.

If the equipment is sterilised, is the sterilised bag opened in front of you?

Is there a yellow sharps container for disposal of sharps in order to avoid cross contamination or needle stick injuries?

What experience does the operator have?

Is the skin cleaned with antiseptic before skin penetration?

Does the operator provide you with after care information?