

# Code of Practice 6: Cosmetic piercing

## Purpose

The purpose of this code of practice (COP) is to support the policy decisions and conditions of licence adopted by the council in respect of special treatments establishments.

## Scope

This COP details specific requirements for cosmetic piercing in addition to those laid down in the regulations prescribing standard conditions applicable to all special treatment licensed premises.

## Definitions

### Cosmetic piercing

For the purposes of this COP cosmetic piercing refers to lower ear lobe piercing, upper ear cartilage piercing and nose piercing and excludes any other form of body piercing. Piercing of any other part of the body is governed by the conditions detailed in code of practice seven.

### Nose piercing

Piercing of the nasal cavity walls only.

### Nose piercing gun

Refers to a device, whether single use or reusable, specifically designed for the purpose and is capable of piercing the nasal cavity wall with the nose stud without the need for a clasp/butterfly clip. Ear piercing guns must not be used.

### Ear piercing

Piercing of the lower earlobe and/or flat part of the upper ear cartilage. Piercing of the curled part of the cartilage is not permitted.

### Ear piercing gun

Refers to a device, whether single use or reusable, designed specifically for piercing ears.

## Permitted piercing systems

### Ear piercing

- Blomdahl medical ear piercing system
- Caflon
- Medisept
- Studex
- Estelle

### Nose piercing

- Blomdahl
- Studex

## Cleaning

This is a physical process which removes soil eg dust, dirt and organic matter, along with a large proportion of germs. Cleaning with hot water and detergent breaks up grease and dirt on floors and surfaces. Cleaning is also essential prior to disinfection and sterilisation of instruments and equipment.

## Disinfection

For the purposes of these treatments a high level disinfectant relates to disinfectants capable of reducing the number of viable bacteria and blood borne viruses including Hepatitis B and C and HIV but which may not necessarily inactivate some viruses and bacterial spores. Where the disinfectant requires dilution this must be carried out in



accordance with the manufacturer's instructions using clean potable water. Once diluted the disinfectant must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. Immersion must be in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

## Client consultation

Before piercing the practitioner must examine the area to be pierced to determine the suitability of the client for piercing.

Before treatment clients must be informed verbally of the risks associated with piercing and must complete and sign a client consent form, which details the risks and possible complications appropriate to the piercing site, prior to piercing. This must include:

- name
- address
- age
- name of piercer
- type of piercing (lower ear lobe, cartilage, nose)
- the form must be signed and dated

Clients under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who must sign the consent form. Where there is any doubt about the age of the client photo identification must be obtained before piercing.

## Nose piercing

The inner surface of the nose harbours bacteria which may cause infection and the complications following piercing may be greater than for lower ear lobe piercing. The piercer must ensure that the client is aware of the increased risk of infection and the need to obtain medical advice should infection occur.

## Upper ear cartilage piercing

- If infection occurs after upper ear cartilage piercing there is a risk of persistence of infection and the possibility of abscess formation and scarring. The piercer must ensure the client is aware of the need to obtain medical advice should infection occur.
- Clients must be advised of the expected healing time for each type of piercing before the procedure is performed.

- Clients must be informed verbally of the need for good hygiene after piercing and written aftercare advice must be provided.
- Client records must be held on the premises for a period of two years and be available for inspection by an authorised officer.
- Copies of aftercare advice must be available for inspection.

## Infection control

- All piercers must observe high standards of hygiene.
- Hands must be washed using liquid soap and an alcohol rub must be applied before treatment, even if disposable gloves are worn piercers should still wash their hands prior to and after treatment.
- Gloves must be changed between clients and disposed of after use. Practitioners are advised to use non-powdered non-latex gloves or non-powdered low protein latex gloves.
- All work surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each treatment.
- The client's skin must be appropriately cleaned prior to piercing using a skin safe alcohol containing solution or wipes.
- Only pre-sterilised single use studs from undamaged packaging may be used.
- Studs must be opened immediately prior to use in front of the client.
- Ear piercing systems must not be used for nose piercing.

## Training

All practitioners carrying out ear or nose piercing must have relevant training for the piercing system used.

Accepted training includes:

- manufacturer certificated product training
- cosmetic piercing as part of an NVQ

Practitioners who wish to carry out upper ear cartilage must be able to demonstrate that they have had training that includes specific instruction on cartilage piercing. For most piercing systems this will exclude practitioners who obtained their certificates prior to 2001.

Practitioners who wish to carry out nose piercing must be able to demonstrate that

they have had training that includes specific instruction on nose piercing.

## Review

This Code of Practice will be reviewed regularly and updated in light of current industry guidance and legal opinion. Any changes will be notified to licensees and will be attached as conditions to your licence with effect from the date of the next renewal of your licence.

Up to date copies are available by phoning our office on 01895 250191.

The following Hillingdon Council Guidance Notes should be consulted in conjunction with this code of practice:

- Hand washing
- Decontamination