

**AIDS : guidelines for ear piercers : don't die of ignorance / prepared by the Department of Health and Social Security and the Central Office of Information.**

**Contributors**

Great Britain. Department of Health and Social Security.  
Great Britain. Central Office of Information.

**Publication/Creation**

[London] : Dept. of Health and Social Security, 1987.

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/eccwjv7x>

**License and attribution**

Conditions of use: it is possible this item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

GOVERNMENT INFORMATION 1987

# AIDS



GUIDELINES FOR  
EAR PIERCERS

**DON'T DIE OF IGNORANCE**

## WHAT IS THE RISK?

No one has ever been known to catch the AIDS virus from having their ears pierced. And no one should in future either, if the simple procedures given in this leaflet are always followed.

The risk involved with any one customer is remote. But in the interests both of your customers and of yourself, safe procedures are essential because of the number of customers you work with every day and because it is not possible to tell whether a person is infected or not.

Because the AIDS virus is carried in blood, it is vital that any equipment which may have been contaminated with blood or serum is disposed of, or sterilized before re-use. With the wide choice of completely safe equipment now available, there should be no need to incur any risks at all.

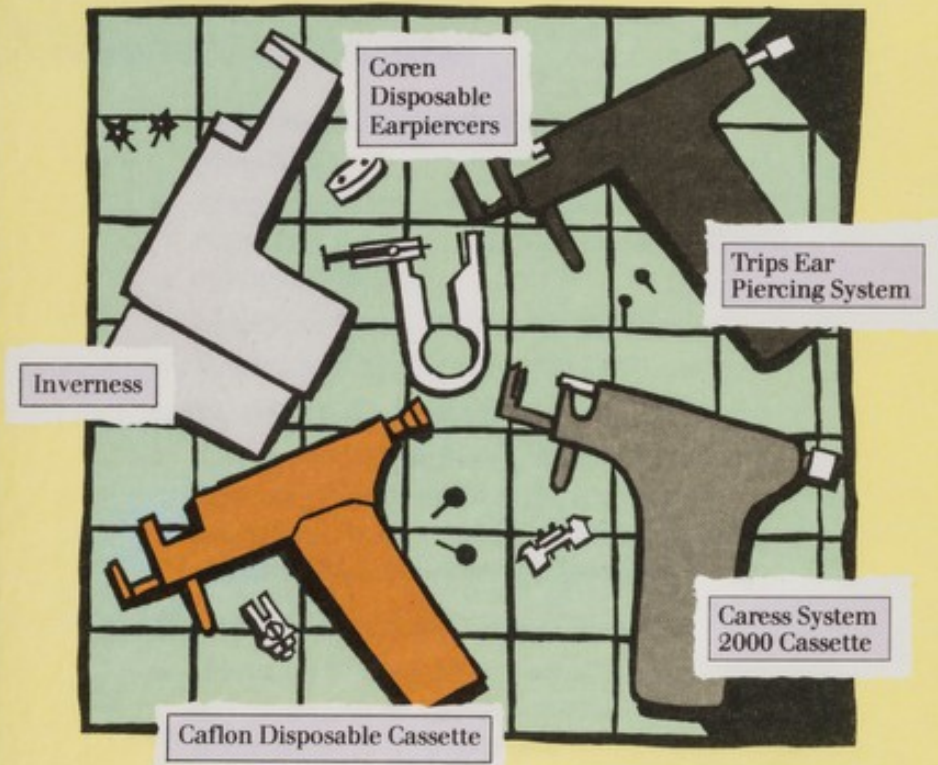
Although this leaflet has been published as part of the Government publicity about AIDS, the procedures followed will also protect your customers and yourself against hepatitis B, a more familiar but also serious risk.

## AIDS AND HEPATITIS B

AIDS is caused by a virus which damages the body's defences against infection. AIDS virus infection is spread almost entirely by sexual intercourse or the transfer of blood from an infected person to another.

Hepatitis B is also caused by a virus and is transmitted in much the same way as the AIDS virus. However, cases of hepatitis have been caused by bad ear piercing practice, with resultant severe illness.

## RECOMMENDED EAR PIERCING SYSTEMS



The following gun systems are designed to protect the gun from contamination and use pre-sterilized ear studs and back clasps:

Caress System 2000 Cassette (Caress Manufacturing Ltd)

Inverness (Cos-matrix Ltd)

Caflon Disposable Cassette (Caflon UK Ltd)

Trips Ear Piercing System (H S Walsh and Son Ltd)

Another method uses an instrument which is supplied already sterilized and which is disposed of after the earstud and back clasp have been discharged. Its name is:

Coren Disposable Earpiercers  
(Newton Laboratories)

**Do not use** any other method which requires the same needle to be used on more than one customer.

**Do not use** gun systems which do not protect the gun from contamination.

#### **WHEN SELLING EARRINGS**

- There is no known case of the AIDS or hepatitis B virus being transmitted through 'trying on' earrings for pierced ears. But it cannot be said that no such risk exists. For this reason and in the interests of general hygiene, the practice should be avoided.

#### **SKIN PREPARATION**

- Make sure that the area to be pierced has been cleaned.
- Do not pierce ears which are obviously diseased or inflamed.

#### **OTHER SKIN PIERCING FOR THE WEARING OF JEWELLERY OR ORNAMENTS**

If the nose or any other part of the anatomy is to be pierced, then a sterile disposable needle must be used and discarded safely after use.



## GENERAL HYGIENE

- Use disposable equipment whenever possible.
- Keep everything clean. Floors should be regularly cleaned, carpets vacuumed and surfaces washed.
- Disinfect work surfaces regularly.
- Wash your hands between customers.

## CUTS ON YOUR HANDS

- Cover existing wounds with a waterproof dressing. Wash fresh cuts, encourage bleeding under running water and then cover with a waterproof dressing.

## DISPOSAL OF 'SHARPS'

- If you have used sharp or pointed instruments be careful when throwing them away. Put them in a secure container such as a plastic bottle or commercial 'sharps' box first so that they cannot accidentally injure anyone. Advice on the collection or disposal of 'sharps' can be obtained from the local Environmental Health Department.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

This leaflet gives general guidance only. More information and advice is available from your local Environmental Health Department.

Other leaflets in this series include:

*Guidelines for acupuncturists*

*Guidelines for unregistered chiropodists*

*Guidelines for electrolysisists*

*Guidelines for hairdressers and barbers*

*Guidelines for tattooists*

There is a free, attractive poster available which covers the general hygiene points made in this leaflet.

If you would like to order more leaflets or the poster, phone 0800 555 777 (24 hours). You won't be charged for your call.