

Environmental Health Department
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EAR PIERCING

*These notes should be
read in conjunction with
the general information
on skin piercing and the
bylaws on this subject.*

METHODS OF EAR PIERCING

Gun method

This is the latest modified version of the gun method, and has as far as possible eliminated sources of infection. The stud and butterfly are both mounted on plastic blocks or capsules which are pre-sterilised. The purpose of the blocks is to screen the gun from contamination during the piercing operation. After piercing the blocks or capsules are discarded. The manufacturers of the recommended method of ear piercing include Inverness, Caflon, Caress and Trips.

Coren method

A variation on the gun method is manufactured by Coren and consists of a U-shaped plastic holder on which both the stud and butterfly are mounted. After piercing the plastic holder is discarded. As no component of this ear piercing method is re-used, infection from one person to another is eliminated, therefore this method is also acceptable.

Gun method 2

The original gun method adopted the principle of the stud acting as the piercing agent. The pre-sterilised stud and butterfly are mounted onto the gun, and the stud is mechanically pushed through the lobe into the butterfly. Infection from contaminated needles is therefore avoided. However, as the lobe touches parts of the gun during the piercing it is possible for the gun to be contaminated by serum. The guns cannot be heat sterilised, therefore infection from this source is

Needle and cork method

The ear is pierced by pushing a needle through the lobe into a piece of cork which acts as a buffer. The sleeper is then threaded through the lobe. The potential risk of infection is high, therefore this method is totally unsuitable.

Simplicity method

This method uses a stainless steel instrument incorporating a needle. Contamination of the instrument and needle during the piercing operation is inevitable. As efficient sterilisation of the equipment is difficult to achieve, this method should not be used.

POINTS TO NOTE

The area of skin to be pierced, ie the earlobe or auricle, should be wiped over with an alcohol-impregnated swab or with iodine-alcohol solution to disinfect the skin prior to needle insertion.

Once the pre-sterilised studs have been opened contamination is possible. Therefore, in instances where the client required one ear only to be pierced, the spare stud should not be kept to be used for another customer.

Customers should be given adequate aftercare advice. Manufactures of the guns will normally provide a printed

**IF YOU REQUIRE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT:**

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