CLEANING AND HEALING OF PIERCED BODY PARTS

General Care:

Ear, Belly, Nipple & Nose Piercings

- Always wash hands thoroughly before contact with piercing.
- Do not use rubbing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide. (Both slow the healing of pierced area by drying and killing new healthy cells.)
- Do not use bacitracin or other ointments. (Ointments attempt to heal the skin & may slow oxygen transport to the tissue).
- Use salt soaks for best care/cleaning of ring or stud and loosening dry material on the skin (¼ teaspoon of sea salt or teaspoon of table salt dissolved in 8oz of warm water).
- To clean the surrounding skin, use mild antiseptic products such as benzalkonium chloride, (Bactine, any liquid antibacterial soap – avoid perfumed products). Dilute 50/50 with water, if soap is too harsh.
  - Twice a day saturate a cotton swab or Q-Tip with the cleaning solution, apply to pierced area, let soak for a few minutes.
  - Remove any dried matter.
  - Rotate the jewelry while the area is wet.

Ear Piercing of the Pinna (above the lobe)

- Because of decreased vascularization in the upper pinna of the ear, it will take longer than the ear lobe to heal, generally between 12-16 weeks.
- It is important to not irritate the ear, it is recommended that you sleep on the non-pierced side (or sleep on your back if both ears are pierced). Use the un-pierced ear when talking on the telephone (or ear phones if both are pierced).

Pierced Belly Buttons or Nipples

- Pierced belly buttons heal in 6-12 months, pierced nipples heal in 6-8 weeks.
- Options for cleaning area with salt water soaks: Make a suction seal between cup and belly button by leaning over cup, then lie down on a towel, lie on your back, cup should be sealed to abdomen. Soak the area for at least 10 minutes. Rinse with plain water. Dry the area thoroughly after soaks.
- OR, Clean the area with salt water soaked cotton swabs or Q-tips. Soak the area for at least 10 minutes. Rinse with plain water. Dry the area thoroughly after soaks.
- Wear loose fitting clothing (Clear, pink, or slightly bloody discharge is normal for several days after piercing).

Nose Piercing

- Do not remove the stud for 8 weeks. Healing may take 12-24 weeks, depending on location of piercing.
- Avoid touching the stud unnecessarily.
- Nose piercings can close within hours, so never leave the piercing without jewelry.
- The special nose stud is designed to be worn with the stem pointing up the nose. This is not normally uncomfortable. If it causes irritation, move the stud slightly until a comfortable position is found.

see reverse side
CLEANING AND HEALING OF PIERCED BODY PARTS

General care:

Tongue, Cheek and Lip Piercings

- Healing time 6-8 weeks
- No oral contact of any kind for 6 weeks (no wet kissing or oral sex).
- Suck on ice or popsicles the first 24-48 hours to minimize swelling and pain.
- Reduce intake of warm beverages, hot or spicy foods, tobacco, alcohol and anything irritating to your mouth.
- Rinse with mouthwash for 30-60 seconds after consumption of anything other than water. If Listerine is too harsh it may be diluted, or use teaspoon sea salt to an 8oz glass of water.
- Use Gly-Oxide/Peroxyl twice daily following the instructions on the bottle: 5 drops on top, 5 drops underneath; let foam and spit. (This is very important.) Afterwards you may rinse with water or salt water.

Tongue

- The size of the stud is important in the healing process. It is best to use a post ¼ inch longer than the thickness of your tongue. When the swelling has improved, the post can be downsized to a slightly shorter but still roomy length. After 6-8 weeks you can wear a stud the length of the piercing.

Cheek and Lip

- The outer opening of the piercing is best treated using liquid antibacterial soap or Bactine. If the liquid soap is too harsh it may be diluted 50/50 with water (avoid perfumed products). Apply liberally with a cotton swab or Q-tip. Rotate the jewelry only after the area is moist and dry material has been loosened or removed.
- Clean 2-3 times daily.
- Continue the above care regimen for 6-8 weeks.

Genital Piercing

- Avoid sexual contact until piercing is fully healed, from 6-10 weeks.
- To clean use warm water with a cleansing agent of antibacterial soap. (ie, Phisoderm, Bactine, or liquid antibacterial soaps such as Dial, Lever 2000, or Softsoap) and avoid perfumed products. Dilute 50/50 with water if irritation occurs.
- Leave the cleanser on the skin for 3 minutes; lather and work the ring back and forth through the piercing half a dozen times.
- Remove any dried matter from the surface of the ring and around the opening of the piercing before turning the ring or stud.
- Rinse under running water or use a peri-cleanse bottle (available over the counter in most drug stores); it has a squirt top which is ideal for rinsing the area.
- Urine may irritate the area but usually does not cause infection.
- Keep the new piercing clean.
- Never touch it with dirty hands.
- During sexual contact, use barriers (condoms, dams, etc.) to keep saliva and other body fluids out of your piercing (avoid sex for 6 to 10 weeks after piercing).

Check our website: www.uhs.berkeley.edu to learn more about this medical concern or others.

For an appointment: www.uhs.berkeley.edu or call 510-642-2000 Clinic Nurse 510-643-7197 for advice.