

# Microdermal implants *aftercare*

## Key Advice

The aftercare of body piercing is important to promote good healing and prevent the risk of infection.

Microdermal implants or dermal anchors are small pieces of jewellery made from titanium inserted into the skin with the stem protruding above, onto which an attachment of your choice is fitted. This attachment should remain in place for at least three months or until the piercing has fully healed. Once it has fully healed other pieces of jewellery can be attached.

Healing times for piercing will vary with the type and position of the piercing and vary from person to person.

For the first few weeks it is normal for the area to be red, tender and swollen.

As with all body art, infection is a risk. To reduce these risks take advice from your practitioner regarding aftercare.

The risk of infection can be greatly reduced by good general hygiene including:

- Hand washing before touching the implant.
- Keeping the implant clean.

## Hand washing

Hand washing is the single most important method of reducing infection. Hands must be washed prior to touching the affected area, therefore reducing the risk of infection.

Wash your hands in warm water and liquid soap, always dry your hands thoroughly with a clean towel or paper towel. This should remove most germs and prevent them being transferred to the affected area.

A new piercing can be tender, itchy and slightly red and can remain so for a few weeks. A pale, odourless fluid may sometimes discharge from the piercing and form a crust. This should not be confused with pus, which would indicate infection.

## Keeping the implant piercing clean

The implant needs to be cleaned twice each day. Cleaning more frequently may damage the skin and slow down the healing process. Your practitioner may also advise you to soak the implant in warm salt water twice a week.

Make up a quantity of warm salt water solution (1/4 level teaspoon of preferably sea salt to an egg cup/shot glass of warm water).

Use a clean cloth or gauze dipped in the solution and apply as a warm compress and also to dab the area to make sure the area under the disc is cleaned as this may become encrusted.

This will soften any discharge and allow you to clean the piercing points with a cotton bud or gauze dipped into the warm salt water solution.

If the area around the implant becomes encrusted soak the piercing for a few minutes by submerging the area of skin containing the piercing in a clean jug or bowl containing the warm salt water solution and loosen the discharge using a cotton bud or clean floss.

Always dry the area thoroughly after cleaning your implant using ONLY fresh disposable paper towel/kitchen roll. A communal hand/bath towel should never be used.

**Do not** over clean the site as this may damage the skin around the implant

**Do not** change the cap of the microdermal implant until fully healed. If in any doubt take advice from your operator

**Do not** use cotton wool to clean the piercing as the fibres in the cotton wool may get caught in the piercing.

**Do not** pick at any discharge and **do not** move, twist or turn the piercing whilst dry. If any secreted discharge has hardened then turning jewellery may cause the discharge to tear the piercing, allowing bacteria to enter the wound and prolonging the healing time.

**Do not** wear clothing that will rub against the piercing as this may irritate the wound and delay healing.

**Do not** use sunbeds for the first two weeks, or if you decide to then cover the wound area with a breathable plaster during tanning.

**Do not** swim for the first 24 hours following a piercing.

## Accidental damage or loss of disc

Contact your practitioner if the implant gets caught in anything or the piercing becomes damaged.

In the unlikely event the disc breaks or comes off, return to the practitioner and have a new disk fitted immediately. If the disc is not replaced the implant may get lost under the skin and will require removal.

## Signs of infection

If appropriate aftercare is not followed infection may occur. The signs of infection are:

- Swelling and redness that increases around the wound.
- A severe burning and throbbing sensation round the site.
- Increased tenderness and increasingly painful to touch.
- An unusual discharge (yellow or green) with an offensive smell.

Speak to your practitioner or seek medical attention immediately if you suffer from any of the above or have any concerns regarding infection in your piercing or if there are any signs of an allergic reaction to any of the products used.

## For further advice or information:

Contact your local Environmental Health Department, or your local Public Health England Health Protection Team

This Information is provided by:  
Public Health England North West  
Public Health England East Midlands  
Tattoo and Piercing Industry Union

Your practitioner is:



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