



body piercing and tattoos

with diabetes

streetwise

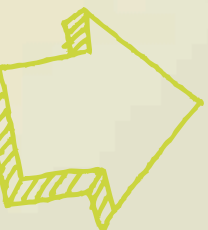
So you think you want
your body pierced?

Some people consider tattoos and piercing to be fashionable, but remember tattoos are permanent, and removing a piercing will often leave a hole or maybe a scar. Make sure that you are 100% certain that you want a piercing or a tattoo before you get one done!

People have used tattoos and piercing since ancient times as a way of decorating their bodies, scaring their enemies, or showing their position in a society. Today they are regarded by some to be as fashionable as jewelry or designer clothes. However, they may be associated with problems which it is important to be aware of.



HAVING DIABETES DOES NOT
NECESSARILY STOP YOU
FROM GETTING A TATTOO OR
HAVING A PIERCING, BUT
THERE ARE THINGS TO
CONSIDER TO TRY & PREVENT
YOUR NEW ACCESSORY FROM
CAUSING PROBLEMS WITH
YOUR DIABETES.



Useful Tips

- If you decide that you are going to get something done, then use a reputable place
- Some local authorities give licenses to shops that offer piercing or tattoos and what that should mean is that the shop meets special hygiene standards to reduce the risk of infections
- Ask friends or family if they have used any particular shops, and what they thought of it
- Make sure the shop knows you have diabetes before anything is done, they should ask you about medical conditions but some do not
- Try & make sure that you have eaten something more than 1 hour before, this will reduce the chances of a hypo or simply fainting through being squeamish
- A helpful shop will be happy to answer any questions you have, and to let you look around their premises before you choose to have a piercing or tattoo
- Take someone with you when you go
- There are no legal restrictions in New Zealand on the age at which you can have your ears or other parts pierced or tattooed. However, some establishments may require parental consent, or operate under local authority guidelines



Put health first





You should not get a piercing or tattoo done if you are already unwell, or if your diabetes control has not been good recently. People with diabetes can be more susceptible to infections and take longer to heal, especially if their diabetes is not well controlled


Any piercing or a tattoo means that the surface of the skin has been broken (like having a small operation) and the broken skin needs to heal.

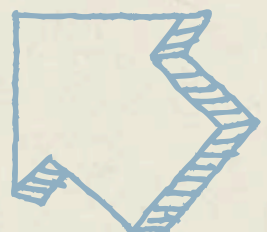
POOR CONTROL OR ILLNESS INCREASES THE RISK OF PROBLEMS AFTER THE PIERCING OR TATTOO HAS BEEN DONE. WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE FEELING BETTER & YOUR BLOOD SUGARS ARE UNDER CONTROL.



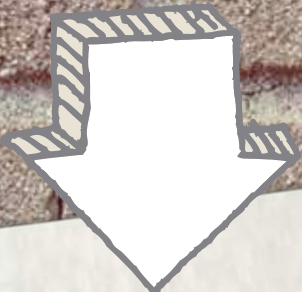


Infections, what to look out for

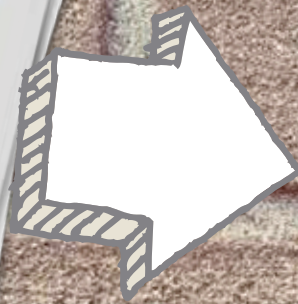
- Any time the skin is broken there is a risk of an infection developing, and with piercing & tattoos there are 2 types of infections that may occur
 - You may be at risk of catching infections transmitted in the blood (such as hepatitis), if the person performing the tattoo or piercing has not cleaned & sterilized all of their equipment properly
 - Skin infections (bacterial infections) that may lead to serious problems if not treated quickly. These problems include diabetic ketoacidosis, toxic shock syndrome or blood poisoning
 - There is also a risk of scarring (keloid scars) with piercing; these scars may be large & lumpy around the pierced area
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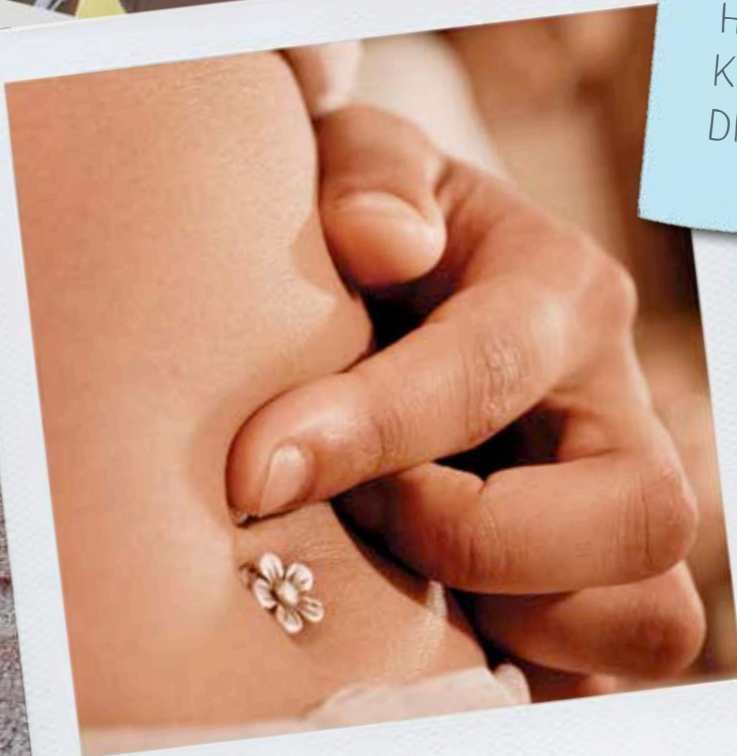
Useful Tips



IF YOU FEEL ILL IN THE FIRST FEW WEEKS AFTER YOU HAVE A PIERCING, THEN IT MAY BE BECAUSE OF AN INFECTION CAUSED BY THE PIERCING - CONTACT YOUR DIABETES SPECIALIST NURSE, AS YOU MAY NEED TREATMENT AND BE AT RISK OF DEVELOPING DIABETIC KETOACIDOSIS.



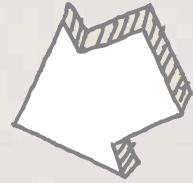
TEST YOUR BLOOD SUGARS MORE FREQUENTLY IF YOUR PIERCING BECOMES INFECTED, AND TEST FOR KETONES IN YOUR BLOOD OR URINE. IF YOUR BLOOD SUGARS ARE HIGH OR YOU FIND ANY KETONES CONTACT YOUR DIABETES SPECIALIST NURSE.



body piercing

Afterwards...

- The person performing the piercing should give you advice on how to look after the area that has been pierced. Follow this advice. Ask them before you get a piercing done what advice they recommend. If they cannot give you any, find somewhere else to go
- A lip or tongue piercing will make eating and drinking uncomfortable and difficult for a few weeks, and may cause unsteady blood sugars
- If the area around the piercing becomes red, painful, swollen, or you notice any sticky (can be yellowish or greenish) discharge then the area is likely to be infected. You should see a doctor immediately
- If the area does become infected then you might have to remove the piercing to help in treating the infection. To leave it in will make the infection harder to treat and increase the risk of scarring



Contact Numbers

School Nurse:

Diabetes Specialist or Local Team:

Kidshealth

<http://www.kidshealth.org.nz>

Starship Transition

<https://www.starship.org.nz/patients-parents-and-visitors/youth-transition/diabetes-service>

Youth Law Aotearoa

<http://www.youthlaw.co.nz>

A series of leaflets is available that may be helpful for you:

- Annual Review
- Body Piercing & Tattooing
- Emotional Well-being
- Exercise
- Insulin Pumps
- Looking After Type 1 Diabetes
- Sensible Drinking
- Sex and Beyond
- Top Tips for School
- Travelling

Ask your diabetes team for the ones you want.

Provided by Lilly as a support to medicine and patients with diabetes. This leaflet has been written by the RCN Children and Young People Diabetes Community (CYPDC). Lilly's involvement is limited to production costs and a review of the content for medical accuracy only.

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