

Cosmetic Piercing - Code of Practice 6

Purpose

The purpose of this code of practice (COP) is to support the policy decisions and conditions of licence adopted by the council in respect of special treatments establishments.

Scope

This COP details specific requirements for cosmetic piercing in addition to those laid down in the regulations prescribing standard conditions applicable to all special treatment licensed premises.

Definitions

Cosmetic piercing

For the purposes of this COP cosmetic piercing refers to lower ear lobe piercing, upper ear cartilage piercing and nose piercing and excludes any other form of body piercing. Piercing of any other part of the body is governed by the conditions detailed in [Body Piercing Code of Practice 7](#)

Nose piercing

Piercing of the nasal cavity walls only.

Nose piercing gun

Refers to a device, whether single use or reusable, specifically designed for the purpose and is capable of piercing the nasal cavity wall with the nose stud without the need for a clasp/butterfly clip. Ear piercing guns must not be used.

Ear piercing

Piercing of the lower earlobe and/or flat part of the upper ear cartilage. Piercing of the curled part of the cartilage is not permitted.

Ear piercing gun

Refers to a device, whether single use or reusable, designed specifically for piercing ears.

Cleaning and sterilising of Equipment

All surfaces that come into contact with staff, equipment or clients must be disinfected daily.

Any surfaces used during treatments must be disinfected prior to use.

Any equipment that has been contaminated with blood however small must be cleaned and sterilised.

Client consultation

Before piercing the practitioner must examine the area to be pierced to determine the suitability of the client for piercing.

Before treatment clients must be informed verbally of the risks associated with piercing and must complete and sign a client consent form, which details the risks and possible complications appropriate to the piercing site, prior to piercing. This must include:

- name
- address
- age and date of birth
- date of piercing
- area to be pierced
- name of piercer
- type of piercing (lower ear lobe, cartilage, nose)
- the form must be signed and dated
- Medical history – does the client have eczema, psoriasis, haemophilia, high/low blood pressure, epilepsy, diabetes, any allergies. Is the client taking medication or blood thinning agents
- Record that aftercare advice/leaflet given

For ear piercing clients under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who must sign the consent form. Where there is any doubt about the age of the client photo identification must be obtained before piercing.

Nose piercing – 16 years and over only

The inner surface of the nose harbours bacteria which may cause infection and the complications following piercing may be greater than for lower ear

lobe piercing. The piercer must ensure that the client is aware of the increased risk of infection and the need to obtain medical advice should infection occur.

Upper ear cartilage piercing – 16 Years and Over

A parent or legal guardian must be present for persons over 16 and under 18 years of age and a written letter of consent must be obtained

- If infection occurs after upper ear cartilage piercing there is a risk of persistence of infection and the possibility of abscess formation and scarring. The piercer must ensure the client is aware of the need to obtain medical advice should infection occur.
- Clients must be advised of the expected healing time for each type of piercing before the procedure is performed.
- Clients must be informed verbally of the need for good hygiene after piercing and written aftercare advice must be provided.
- Client records must be held on the premises for a period of two years and be available for inspection by an authorised officer.
- Copies of aftercare advice must be available for inspection.

Infection control

- All piercers must observe high standards of hygiene.
- Hands must be washed using liquid soap and an alcohol rub must be applied before treatment, even if disposable gloves are worn piercers should still wash their hands prior to and after treatment.
- Gloves must be changed between clients and disposed of after use. Practitioners are advised to use non-powdered non-latex gloves or non-powdered low protein latex gloves.
- All work surfaces must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each treatment.
- The client's skin must be appropriately cleaned prior to piercing using a skin safe alcohol containing solution or wipes.
- Only pre-sterilised single use studs from undamaged packaging may be used.
- All jewellery must be of a suitable grade e.g. stainless steel, solid 14K or 18K gold, niobium, titanium, platinum, or dense low porosity plastic. This is to minimise the risk of allergic reaction, harbouring of bacteria or adhesion to newly formed skin. Grade 316 stainless steel does not comply with the Dangerous Substances and Preparations (Nickel) (Safety) Regulations 2000) and is not to be used. Any gold-plated jewellery shall not be used as the plating will eventually wear exposing

the skin to metal allergy. Sterling silver shall not be used as silver is alloyed with 7.5% copper or a mixture of other metals which makes it reactive. Fine Silver is too soft, damages easily which may increase the risk of infection at the piercing site.

- Studs must be opened immediately prior to use in front of the client.
- Ear piercing systems must not be used for nose piercing.

Training

All practitioners carrying out ear or nose piercing must have relevant training for the piercing system used.

Accepted training includes:

- manufacturer certificated product training
- cosmetic piercing as part of an NVQ

Practitioners who wish to carry out upper ear cartilage must be able to demonstrate that they have had training that includes specific instruction on cartilage piercing. For most piercing systems this will exclude practitioners who obtained their certificates prior to 2001.

Practitioners who wish to carry out nose piercing must be able to demonstrate that they have had training that includes specific instruction on nose piercing.

Review

This Code of Practice will be reviewed regularly and updated in light of current industry guidance and legal opinion. Any changes will be notified to licensees and will be attached as conditions to your licence with effect from the date of the next renewal of your licence.

Further information

The following London Borough of Redbridge Guidance Notes should be consulted in conjunction with this code of practice

- [GN1 -Guidance notes on hand washing](#)
- [GN2 - Guidance notes on decontamination](#)
- [GN4 – Guidance notes on sharps injuries](#)