

# Tattooing and Micropigmentation



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND  
EMERGENCY SERVICES

Services that break the skin, such as tattooing and micropigmentation, are well-recognized risk factors for the transmission of blood-borne infections such as Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C. **Infection prevention and control precautions must be followed to protect both personal service provider and clients.**

You do not have to see blood or body fluids on the instruments for an infection to occur.

In addition to the general operational requirements for personal services settings, the following specific procedures for tattooing and micropigmentation must be practiced.

## Infection Prevention and Control requirements

### Hand hygiene

- Hand hygiene must be practiced by the personal service provider (PSP):
  - Before and after each client;
  - Between procedures on the same client where soiling of the hands is likely;
  - After contact with blood or body fluids or after contact with items known to be contaminated with blood or body fluids;
  - Before putting on gloves and after removing gloves;
  - Between breaks in service; or
  - Whenever hands are soiled.

### Gloves

- Gloves should be worn for contact with blood, body fluids, and/or when handling visibly soiled items.
- Gloves should be changed between procedures with the same client and between clients.
- Gloves should be removed immediately after completion of the procedure, and before touching clean surfaces.
- Single-use disposable gloves must never be reused or washed.
- Gloves should be worn whenever the personal service provider has non-intact skin (cut or scratch).

### Prior to service

- **Only use single-use, pre-packaged, pre-sterilized needles.**
- Open sterile, packaged instruments and tools immediately prior to beginning a procedure. If the sterile packaging is not intact, it should not be used. Client's skin should be assessed for signs of infection. Do not tattoo or micropigment within six inches of inflamed or infected skin, or skin with a rash.
- The service site on the client's skin must be cleaned with a skin antiseptic prior to providing an invasive procedure.
- All supplies required for tattooing or micropigmentation must be assembled and set-up immediately prior to starting the procedure. Remove items not required for the service from the work area.
- Ensure that the worker's personal items are stored separate from client supplies.
- The needle holder device, outer casing and inner needle chamber must be single-use disposable or cleaned and then readily sterilized before re-use.
- Cover any work surfaces or items that can not be cleaned and disinfected with single-use disposable coverings.
- Surfaces covered by plastic or other barriers must be cleaned with a low-level disinfectant after each client. Any surfaces accidentally contaminated with blood and/or bodily fluids must be cleaned with a high-level disinfectant.

### **Prior to service continued**

- Use disposable razors for shaving the tattoo area.
- Prior to using disposable ink caps supplied in bulk, individual ink caps must be cleaned and disinfected with an intermediate level disinfectant (e.g. 70–90% isopropyl alcohol) for a contact time of 10 minutes. Disposable ink caps must be discarded immediately after each client. If additional ink is required a new ink cap must be used.
- Dispense creams, lotions and ointments using single-use applicators. Discard leftover creams and lotions.

### **After service**

- Tattoo area is covered with a clean, sterile non-stick dressing.
- Discard used needles and needle bars immediately after use to avoid needle stick injuries.
- Used needles/sharps must be placed into a puncture-resistant, leak-proof container with a tight-fitting lid and properly labelled with a biological hazard sign.
- Ink caps, leftover ink and leftover petroleum jelly must be disposed of in a lined garbage container. Do not return to their original containers and do not use on another client.
- Discard unprotected and unused tissues and wipes after each client.
- Discard all plastic coverings after each client.
- Stencils must be single-use and discarded at the end of the procedure.
- Store soiled instruments in a labelled container for cleaning and disinfecting/sterilizing.

### **Blood and body fluid exposures**

- Client must be given verbal and written after care information regarding tattooing after care.
- Keep client records and accidental blood and body fluid exposure records on site for at least one year and have records available at least off site for five years.
- Hepatitis B vaccination for staff is strongly recommended.
- **Note:** Any handling and manipulation of used needles in any manner, such as disassembling the needle bar from the needles, increases the risk of needle stick injury for the personal service provider. Therefore, do not handle or manipulate used needles before disposing of them safely in a sharps disposal container.

### **References:**

1. Infection Prevention and Control Best Practices for Personal Service Settings. Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. January 2009.
2. Table 6 – Detailed Infection Prevention and Control Procedures for Tattooing and Micropigmentation. Infection Prevention and Control Best Practices for Personal Service Settings. Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. January 2009. Pg. 60–64

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.

2245124 (10/16)

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