

# THE POINT

The Official Newsletter for The Association of Professional Piercers

## Campaign Against Piercing Kits

Aaron Franko of the Ink Factory Tattoos & Body Piercings in Hudson, Wisconsin is on a campaign. He has put together a letter to legislators, and a petition against the sale of piercing kits. He is intending to send a copy of the petition to our legislators on July 1, 2001.

He has hope that a concerted effort will help to make a difference. Below is a copy of the letter, along with an incredibly rude, unprofessional response from a distributor of piercing kits. Also included is a listing of the contents of one kit, and their dangerously inadequate instructions on how to pierce an eyebrow.

Please help in the nationwide campaign to regulate the "piercing kit" industry. A copy of this letter will be sent to each state's lawmakers along with the collected signatures.

All that is asked is your support in gathering signatures. See page 14 for the information that should go on the petition. The target date to complete the collection of signatures is July 1, 2001. Please send all the signatures you have gathered to the address listed below on July 1.

Please feel free to email or call Aaron with any questions regarding this matter. Thank you very much for your support!

Aaron Franko  
 Ink Factory Tattoos & Body Piercings  
 406 2nd St.  
 Hudson, WI 54016  
 715-381-2957  
 aaron@inkfactory.com

### Letter to legislators:

In an effort to promote public safety, I, along with the professional piercers and concerned citizens listed on the attached pages are requesting your immediate attention regarding a very serious matter concerning the safety of children, young adults, and adults in the United States. The issue is that of underage, untrained, and/or unlicensed people performing body piercings at parties, in their homes, or wherever they choose; using readily available "piercing kits" sold through mail order, on the Internet, or by calling a toll free telephone number.

The manner in which these piercing kits are packaged, sold and ultimately used in an unsupervised environment by untrained individuals results in a much greater than usual possibility for the transmission of bacteria and blood borne pathogens such as Hepatitis and HIV.

In order to clarify what a piercing kit is, I have included a packing list of a typical piercing kit sold at <http://www.coolpiercings.com>.

- \* (1) Sterile, Pre-lubricated 16Ga. X 1.5" Piercing Needle
- \* (1) Clamp
- \* (1) 18Ga. X 7/16" Surgical Stainless Steel Body Jewelry (Ball Closure Ring)
- \* Neosporin Ointment
- \* Sterile Alcohol Swab
- \* Q-Tip
- \* Instructions

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## APP Represented in Massachusetts

Massachusetts had been one of the few holdout regions or states in which tattooing has been illegal. It was determined by the state that legalized, regulated body arts posed a significantly smaller risk to the public than the prior ban on tattooing and lack of regulation for piercing, branding, and scarification (implants are still illegal).

The Massachusetts Environmental Health Association (MEHA) held an informative conference for interested parties on December 13, 2000. Attendance exceeded the coordinators' expectations. The meeting was largely successful in providing much needed information on adaptation of the State's model code for Legislation on Body Art.

It was my honor to present APP guidelines for aftercare, membership criteria, and appropriate jewelry standards. My presentation touched on the anthropological context of body piercing, its first world progression, its viability as an industry, the evolution of the APP, and upcoming issues.

Bethra Szumski

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T-shirts can be purchased from the website ([www.safepiercing.org](http://www.safepiercing.org))  
Cost is \$15.00 plus \$3.00 S/H. Slightly higher cost for size XL

Bowling shirts are \$24.95 each and are available in the two styles shown.

Contact Pat McCarthy 614-297-4743 if you are interested in purchasing shirts.

The Point

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# Body piercing and MRI Scans

Dr. Jack Ward

One source of contention that exists between people with body piercings and the healthcare industry is the requirement to remove body jewelry during MRI scans. The issues for the healthcare workers are projectile objects, burns, and MR image artifacts. The issues for a pierced individual are potential hole-closure and the awkwardness of the entire situation.

For the healthcare workers, it is important to evaluate objects with regard to safety and compatibility when an MRI scan is to be performed. Safety refers to the potential for injury to the individual. Compatibility implies the potential for injury to the implant and/or the potential source of artifacts.

Potential sources of concern are related to one or more fields in the MR environment. These fields include the static magnetic field, the RF (radio frequency) electromagnetic field, and the gradient (time-varying) magnetic fields. The interaction between an implant and the static magnetic field of a MR system includes attraction or deflection, and torque. The effect on ferromagnetic materials exposed to static magnetic fields can range from significant projectile motion to modifications in the orientation of the object.

The RF electromagnetic fields can cause a temperature increase in the object, leading to burns of the surrounding tissues. This occurs when the anatomical area that contains the object is exposed to the fields from the transmitting RF coil. Multiple 180-degree RF pulses can produce high levels of RF energy deposition in the body. As the field strength of the MR system increases, the RF

power deposited in the body increases. The potential for heating is due to the type of metal, and to the RF fields being concentrated at the area.

For an individual with body piercing, the main issue is the metal content of the jewelry. Studies have been performed on various types of stainless steel, titanium, and titanium alloys. One particular study evaluated the difference between type 304 and type 316L stainless steel (SS).

The process of “cold work” – any mechanical deformation at room temperature - increases the tensile strength for both type 304 SS and 316L SS. In addition, the application of cold work may increase the magnetic permeability of nonmagnetic stainless steel. The resulting permeability is dependent upon metal composition and the amount of cold work. Cold working can transform a nonmagnetic object to a magnetic structure. Minimal mechanical deformation of Type 304 SS increases the ferromagnetic qualities up to 62%, and can produce large artifacts on the MRI scan. For type 316L SS the amount of magnetic changes produced by the cold-working process was 0. No magnetic field attraction or MR image distortion occurred as a result of cold working. This study concluded that manufacturing deformation and/or manipulation of type 316L SS should not produce ferromagnetism. As such, metallic bioimplants made from ASTM surgical implant-grade 316L SS should not be attracted to a 1.5 static magnetic field, nor produce significant artifacts during an MRI scan. For type 316L SS objects, the higher alloy content, particularly nickel, stabilizes the nonmagnetic properties.

Similar studies have been performed to evaluate the magnetic properties of metallic aneurysmal clips in an MR system. Non-ferromagnetic materials such as titanium or titanium alloys are safe for patients undergoing MR procedures.

Therefore, for pierced individuals wearing body jewelry made from titanium, titanium alloys and surgical implant-grade 316L SS, body jewelry removal for an MRI scan should not be an issue of contention unless the jewelry is directly in the area to be examined.

## References:

1. A. M. Sawyer-Glover, F.G. Shellock, Pre-MRI Procedure Screening: Recommendations and Safety Considerations for Biomedical Implants and Devices, *J. Magnetic Resonance Imaging*, 12: 92-106 (2000).
2. L. P. Bendel, F. G. Shellock, M. Steckel, The Effect of Mechanical Deformation on Magnetic Properties and MRI Artifacts of Type 304 and Type 316L Stainless Steel, *J. Magnetic Resonance Imaging*, 7 (6): 1170-1173.
3. F. G. Shellock, E. Kanal, Aneurysm Clips: Evaluation of MR Imaging Artifacts at 1.5 T, *Radiology*, 209(2): 563-566 (November 1998).
4. F. G. Shellock, J. V. Crues, Aneurysm Clips: Assessment of Magnetic Field Interaction Associated with a 0.2-T Extremity MR System, *Radiology*, 208(2): 407-409 (August 1998).

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With the arrival of 2001 the quantity of new web sites related to the body modification industry has dramatically increased. There is now close to 5 times the number there was during 2000. The new accessibility to our industry in recent times opens many new doors of possibility, some fantastic, some very frightening.

One of the most crucial roles the internet plays in our daily lives is that information about anything you could possibly think of is just a click or two away. For some people the idea of body modification is taboo, or they are just afraid to ask anyone questions about it. Body art may not be something that anyone in their social circle has been exposed to. So the internet is an easy way to research until they are ready to venture into a studio.

After spending countless hours visiting site after site, a few stood out as responsible business ventures, selling jewelry and offering as wide a variety of sizes as fine studios do. Most have disclaimers stating that jewelry is non-refundable, so purchasing on-line is at your own risk. You need to know your exact size.

Many body art sites had links to the APP web site, urging clients to visit a responsible piercer. One site that sold only body jewelry said, "Body piercing should always be done by a Body Piercing Specialist, operating within the regulations of the responsible local government agencies."

Lots of sites refrained from selling needles, selling only insertion tapers and jewelry. Some pre-packaged and auto-claved their wares. Every piercer has clients that are well informed and experienced enough to remove and reinsert his/her own jewelry. So the convenience is ideal for a client that is not able to visit a safe studio as often as they would like to change jewelry.

The cons can definitely outweigh the pros in an industry that relies so heavily on safety and the responsibility and ethics of a trained professional. The most obvious issue that can result in disaster is the sale of needles and piercing equipment. These can easily get into the hands of an individual that is piercing friends and associates without knowledge of anatomy, hygiene issues, cross-contamination or sterilization techniques.

Most companies did not have any policy restricting the sale of needles to non-professionals. One stated "We do NOT recommend that you pierce yourself. We strongly recommend that you visit a professional for your piercing." This is next to a picture of a needle and the price tag of \$5.00 USD. They are willing to take your money regardless of the circumstances.

A well-known public auction site features many sales that include a needle in a piercing "kit". One so-called kit includes a 14 gauge 7/16" captive bead ring in a "navel/nipple ring kit" with the jewelry and a sterile 14 gauge needle in one autoclave pouch. The statement is printed by the sale, "This auction is meant for body piercers only. Do not bid on it if you do not know how to safely pierce." But, naturally, no proof of your ability is required for purchase.

Most states now have or are working towards legislation that requires metal specifications sheets for jewelers to prove the quality and purity of the jewelry sold and used for piercing. Just because a piece is termed "surgical steel" does not mean it meets the ASTM designation of 316 LVM F-138 for implant grade steel. Clearly much of what is available is not of high quality.

Another "body piercing kit" heads the page with the statement "Start making money today!" This kit includes a handy quick reference guide, "Body Piercing for the Beginner" and includes the stereotypical contents that could not produce a single professional piercing. There were 5 pair of gloves and not any mention of sterilization or anything included for proper handling of the used tools after one piercing.

One of the other really disturbing finds was an instructional video featuring "four of the most common body piercings: nipples, tongue, clitoris hood and belly button in easy, step-by-step procedures" of course, with beautiful models. A clitoris hood is not one of the 4 most common piercings for most piercers, and is obviously far too advanced a placement for beginners. Further, not all women have suitable anatomy for those piercings which can result in serious problems.

So, as we enter the new millennium with a body art studio on every suburban corner, a new challenge arises to keep people educated and informed before they even leave the house.

# Colloidal Silver: Risk Without Benefit

**Stephen Barrett, M.D.**

Colloidal silver is a suspension of sub-microscopic metallic silver particles in a colloidal base. Long-term use of silver preparations can lead to argyria, a condition in which silver salts deposit in the skin, eyes, and internal organs, and the skin turns ashen-gray. Many cases of argyria occurred during the pre-antibiotic era when silver was a common ingredient in nosedrops. When the cause became apparent, doctors stopped recommending their use, and reputable manufacturers stopped producing them. The official drug guidebooks (United States Pharmacopeia and National Formulary) have not listed colloidal silver products since 1975.

## Dubious Ads

In recent years, silver-containing products have been marketed with unsubstantiated claims that they are effective against AIDS, cancer, infectious diseases, parasites, chronic fatigue, acne, warts, hemorrhoids, enlarged prostate, and many other diseases and conditions. Some marketers claim that colloidal silver is effective against hundreds of diseases.

During 1998, a Florida-based multilevel company, stated:

Our colloidal silver contains 99.99% pure silver particles suspended indefinitely in demineralized water that kills bacteria and viruses. It can be applied topically and/or absorbed into the blood stream sub-lingually (under the tongue), thereby avoiding the negative effects of traditional antibiotics that kill good bacteria in the lower digestive tract.

An all natural antibiotic alternative in the purest form available. The presence of colloidal silver near a virus, fungi, bacterium or any other single celled pathogen disables its oxygen-metabolism enzyme, its chemical lung, so to say. The pathogens suffocates and dies, and is cleared out of the body by the immune, lymphatic and elimination systems.

Unlike pharmaceutical antibiotics which destroy beneficial enzymes, colloidal silver leaves these beneficial enzymes

intact. Thus colloidal silver is absolutely safe for humans, reptiles, plants and all multi-celled living matter.

It is impossible for single-celled germs to mutate into silver-resistant forms, as happens with conventional antibiotics. Also, colloidal silver cannot interact or interfere with other medicines being taken. Colloidal silver is truly a safe, natural remedy for many of mankind's ills. Colloidal silver can be taken indefinitely because the body does not develop a tolerance to it [1]

Seasilver International, a California-based multilevel company, claims that Americans are suffering from "silver deficiency." Although silver is not an essential nutrient, product information posted on the company's Web site states:

The depletion of minerals in our soil has left us deficient of silver, one of our most essential trace minerals, causing a drastic increase in immune system disorders in our society in the last decade. Research has taught us that all disease is allowed to manifest itself because of a weakened immune system. In over 20 years of worldwide research on Colloidal Silver, numerous interviews with government agencies, health care practitioners and their patients, no other nutrient, herb or drug (prescription or over-the-counter) is as safe and effective against all known forms of unfriendly virus, bacteria, and fungus. Additionally, while it is generally known that most antibiotics kill only perhaps 6 or 7 different disease organisms, reports have shown that Colloidal Silver has been used successfully in the treatment of over 650 diseases! Furthermore, strains of disease organisms fail to develop in the presence of Colloidal Silver. Colloidal Silver's greatest attribute is its unique ability to function as a superior second immune system in the body! [2]

## Critical Studies

In 1995, an herbal distributor named Leslie Taylor tested nine commonly marketed colloidal silver products available at health-food stores and concluded:

\* Two of the products were contaminated with microorganisms.

\* The amount of silver suspended in solution varied from product to product and would gradually decrease over time.

\* Only five products actually showed antibacterial activity in a laboratory test.

To perform the test, she prepared a culture plate with *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria, which can cause infections in humans. She then placed a drop from each product on the plate and used disks of two common antibiotics as controls. After eight hours of incubation, she found that bacterial growth had been inhibited around the antibiotics and four of the products.

Of course, the fact that a product inhibits bacteria in a laboratory culture doesn't mean it is effective (or safe) in the human body. In fact, products that kill bacteria in the laboratory would be more likely to cause argyria because they contain more silver ions that are free to deposit in the user's skin. .

FDA laboratory studies have found that the amount of silver in some product samples has varied from 15.2% to 124% of the amount listed on the product labels. The amount of silver required to produce argyria is unknown. However, the FDA has concluded that the risk of using silver products exceeds any unsubstantiated benefit [3].

## Enforcement Actions

In October 1996, the FDA proposed to ban the use of colloidal silver or silver salts in over-the-counter products [4]. A Final Rule banning such use was issued on August 17, 1999. The rule applies to any nonprescription colloidal silver or silver salt product claimed to be effective in preventing or treating any disease [5]. Silver products can still be sold as "dietary supplements" provided that no health claims are made for them.

continued on page.....9

## Classifieds

### Jobs offered

Body Piercer Wanted for busy Piercing Studio in Newport Beach Ca. visit our website at: [www.skinworks-rifraf.com](http://www.skinworks-rifraf.com) follow the piercing studio tour link. Or call (949)-723-2099 ask to speak to Ardee after 12 p.m...or e-mail Ardee at: [ardeeallen@earthlink.net](mailto:ardeeallen@earthlink.net)

### Jobs wanted

Professional Piercer relocating from Cincinnati, OH. Prefer no big cities. Ten years experience; owner of dedicated piercing studio (no tattooing) for six years. Management material, skilled and experienced in all aspects of running a studio.

Please contact Andrew (513) 542-9789 or (513) 541-7363

For reference contact: Elayne Angel, Rings of Desire, New Orleans (504)524-6147

### How to Contact the APP

Requests for general information and spore test results should be sent to: Association of Professional Piercers PMB 286 5446 Peachtree Industrial Blvd. Chamblee, GA 30341

To contact the following members of the board:

#### Office of the President

Pat McCarthy c/o Piercology  
872 N. High St.  
Columbus, OH 43215

#### Office of the Secretary

Bethra Szumski c/o Virtue and Vice  
2271 Cheshire Bridge Rd.  
Atlanta, GA 30324

#### Outreach Coordinator

Elayne Angel c/o Rings of Desire  
1128 Decatur St.  
New Orleans, LA 70116

or visit The APP Website at:  
[www.safepiercing.org](http://www.safepiercing.org)

## Bloodborne Pathogens Course Online-Red Cross Indianapolis

by Elayne Angel

The Red Cross of Greater Indianapolis has done many types of training in disease prevention since World War I. They are now presenting first aid and related courses on the web. One web course you can take right at home is Bloodborne Pathogens for Tattoo Artists and Body Piercers.

The url is: <https://www2.redcross-indy.org/hss/web1.asp>

This is the entry page for all courses; the course of interest to those in the Body Art field is BBP-Tattoo.

There is a modest charge (\$11.95) for taking the course. The fee is used to keep the web site running and to develop more courses. The Bloodborne Pathogens course was the second course developed by the Indianapolis chapter. The first was Basic First Aid Training for Kids.

I took the course which included video clips to watch, text, and graphics, plus definitions for vocabulary terms that were identified. At the end of each section there were questions that I needed to answer and email in the responses.

The course was organized into various sections, and each had an introduction with clearly identified objectives before the course work was given. The information was quite comprehensive and covered OSHA requirements including giving a detailed

Sample Exposure Control Plan. The main problem I had with the course was that I never had any response back from them about whether they had received the emailed answers I had sent them, or whether they knew I had completed the course. I did not receive any notification from them nor any certification. Since I already have my certification and was just checking out their program, I didn't press the point to find out what had happened.

If there is no other option to obtain this necessary training available, I would say this could be worthwhile. That is, if the kinks of communicating with them could be worked out, so you could actually obtain feedback, and ultimately, a certificate at the completion of training.

Thanks to Malcolm Mallette of the Red Cross of Greater Indianapolis for answering my initial inquiries.

Send questions to the e-mail address:  
[mallettem@home.com](mailto:mallettem@home.com) or  
[bbp@redcross-indy.org](mailto:bbp@redcross-indy.org)

For questions, comments, or more information please contact:  
The American Red Cross of Greater Indianapolis  
Bloodborne Pathogens Online  
441 East Tenth Street  
Indianapolis, IN 46202  
Phone: (317) 684-4309  
Email: [bbp@redcross-indy.org](mailto:bbp@redcross-indy.org)

From online at: Medscape.com reprinted for the purpose of reminding piercers that appropriate hand care and handwashing is incredibly important. Also note that many of the problems were associated with the use of artificial nails or nail wraps. Optimally, for safety, it is advisable to maintain clean, well-trimmed nails, free of nail polish, acrylic, or nail wraps.

## Colloidal Silver Risks

...continued from page 7

### References

1. The company (Changes International) is no longer in the supplement business.
2. Seasilver International Product Information, accessed October 12, 1998.
3. Fung MC, Bowen DL. Silver products for medical indications: risk-benefit assessment. *Journal of Toxicology and Clinical Toxicology* 34:119-26, 1996.
4. Federal Register 61:53685-53688, 1996. (To access this document, search the 1996 volume for "colloidal silver.")
5. FDA. Final rule: Over-the-counter drug products containing colloidal silver ingredients or silver salts. *Federal Register* 64:44653-44658, 1999. Download PDF version

Thanks to Dr. Stephen Barrett for permission to reprint.

URL#1: <http://www.quackwatch.com>

URL#2: <http://www.chirobase.org>

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<http://www.canoe.ca/HealthAlternative/home.htm>

## Workers' Hands

### A Potential Source of P. Aeruginosa Infection in ICUs

WESTPORT, Sep 08 (Reuters Health) - Hands of healthcare workers should be cultured as potential reservoirs of infection during endemic *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* infections in intensive care units, suggest researchers from New York-Presbyterian Hospital and Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, in New York.

Dr. Marc Foca and colleagues describe their investigation of endemic *P. aeruginosa* infection in a neonatal intensive care unit in the September 7th issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. In August 1998, *P. aeruginosa* was identified in six infants. From January 1997 to December 1998, 49 incident cases were identified. The eyes and the respiratory tract were the most common sites of colonization.

Cultures of environmental specimens were negative for *P. aeruginosa*, but hands of 10 healthcare workers, from a

total of 166 workers, were culture-positive. Workers with positive hand cultures were significantly older than the those without colonization. A history of using artificial nails or nail wraps was also a risk factor for harboring *P. aeruginosa*.

Three workers were positive for *P. aeruginosa* upon repeat culturing. In one healthcare worker who wore nail extenders, subsequent cultures were negative once the extenders were removed.

The second positive healthcare worker had candida onychomycosis, while the third had otitis externa and persistently positive cultures of the hands, ear canal and anterior nares. Hand cultures of both individuals were negative for the bacterium after the workers were successfully treated for the underlying conditions.

*N Engl J Med* 2000;343:695-700.

Reuters

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## Simply Saline

## Product Review

Elayne Angel

Moments ago I opened a box that was sent here to Rings of Desire. The return address was unfamiliar to me, and I didn't know what I would find inside. The package contained samples of a new product: Blairex Sterile Wound Wash Saline.

This is a sterile 0.9% Sodium Chloride Solution ("normal saline") spray designed specifically to cleanse wounds. It is packaged in a pressurized spray bottle (with no harmful propellants) that dispenses in any position. They report that the "standardized pressure of 6-13 PSI (pounds of pressure per square inch) ensures a continuous cleansing action with every push of the button." The packaging allows for the product to remain sterile in the can until dispensed.

Wow, finally a sterile saline product we can sell in our studios! Or is it?

The product literature reports that it is available as an over-the-counter product in the first aid section of stores such as Walmart, Walgreen's, Albertson's, Osco, Eckerd, Lucky, Longs and so on. Phone inquiries about the product to 10 local stores yielded only one positive response of the product being in stock. So, at this point, in the New Orleans area, this isn't as highly available as Blairex would suggest.

Blairex indicated that we should call McKesson General Medical (or any of several other distributors) to purchase the product. Unfortunately, if we were to purchase from McKesson, they charge \$7.02 per bottle, wholesale. That definitely prices it out of range of the retail market.

Upon further inquiry it turns out that Blairex does offer direct accounts. They

have no minimum, and they pay shipping on orders over \$200.00. The 210cc (7 ounce) bottles cost \$4.57 each, and come in cases of 12 bottles. That is obviously a significantly lower cost, but still would put it on the high end to make any retail mark up on the price.

Well, maybe it is the product for which we have all been searching. If you try it, please do contact us at The POINT with any input.

For more information contact:

Blairex Laboratories, Inc.  
1600 Brian Drive  
P.O. Box 2127  
Columbus, IN 47202-2127  
(800) 252-4739

## Studio Review

## Top Tatttoo and Body Piercing

## Seattle, Washington



**R**ick Rollins began his career as a piercer in 1992 at Greenlake Tattoo studio. Looking to be out on his own he opened Top Tattoo and Body Piercing in April of 1999 in Seattle, Washington. The studio is located in a high traffic area but ultimately clientele is drawn to Top for its Piercer's high standards and attention to detail. Rick doesn't take for granted being in a comfortable, clean work environment.

Our APP survey of piercers shows that the most quickly growing venue for body piercing is within tattoo studios. Top is wonderful example of what this union can be when approached thoughtfully. Top Body Piercing takes an entire lower floor, and the Tattoo business the upper floor.

The piercing rooms are well organized and tidy. The Biohazard and Autoclave room is enclosed with several glass windows, allowing clients to see how equipment is being processed, and view the Autoclave. This room is quite spacious and has an under-counter slide out shelf for the Ultrasonic, allowing the unit to be fully enclosed when it is running. All pertinent certifications and spore test results are beautifully framed and prominently displayed. The waiting area is quite comfortable looking with plants and leather couches.

They are open 7 days a week from noon to 10 p.m..

**Bethra Szumski**



**Top**  
**19918 Aurora Ave.**  
**Seattle, WA**  
**206-533-TOPS**

If you would like to have your studio reviewed please contact Bethra Szumski c/o Virtue and Vice 2271 Cheshire Bridge Rd. Atlanta, GA 30324 (404) 315-6925 or send your own review and photos to Elayne Angel or Beast at 1128 Decatur St. New Orleans, LA 70116 (504) 524-6147

# Communicable Disease Coverage Under Liability Insurance Policies

Susan Preston, President  
Professional Program Insurance Brokerage

Our agency has provided a policy for the tattoo, body piercing and permanent makeup industries for many years. There has always been an exclusion on the policy for communicable diseases. I do not believe the transmission of communicable diseases by a piercer, tattoo artist or permanent cosmetic technician will ever be insurable. It would be against public policy for an insurance company to condone a professional who was not following acceptable business procedures as set down by OSHA and the Centers for Disease Control.

When underwriting a policy, coverage is only provided to those people who follow acceptable sterilization and sanitation guidelines. If the shop or professional did not exercise proper business procedures as claimed on their insurance application, then any coverage for a claim for communicable disease would need to be denied.

It conceivably could happen that a permanent cosmetic technician, body piercer or tattoo shop could be sued for transmission of a communicable disease when they did not do everything by OSHA and Centers for Disease Control guidelines. If the person or business being sued had an insurance policy with the communicable disease exclusion they would send it to their insurance company to determine if the carrier would offer a defense. Each situation would then have to be judged on its own merits. If the one and only allegation of the lawsuit had to do with the transmission of a communicable disease, then the insurance carrier could very well deny any defense of the claim.

What generally happens in any lawsuit is that the party suing will have a number of allegations and reasons for the lawsuit. In those cases, the insurance company might have to offer a defense to the

business if there were allegations that could fall within the terms of the policy or if there were any gray areas where a court might determine the insurance company has to defend. The insurer would never be in a position to pay a judgement if it was determined a disease was transmitted but they could handle the legal expense for the reasons stated above.

Should a professional not buy insurance because of this exclusion? That would not be sound business sense in this day and age when you can never predict what a person might sue for. Even if you do everything right in your business and have strong release forms, any person for any reason can still sue you. It is my opinion that a piercing, tattoo or permanent makeup business is better off with a specialty insurer where there is a possibility the claim will fall under the policy forms.

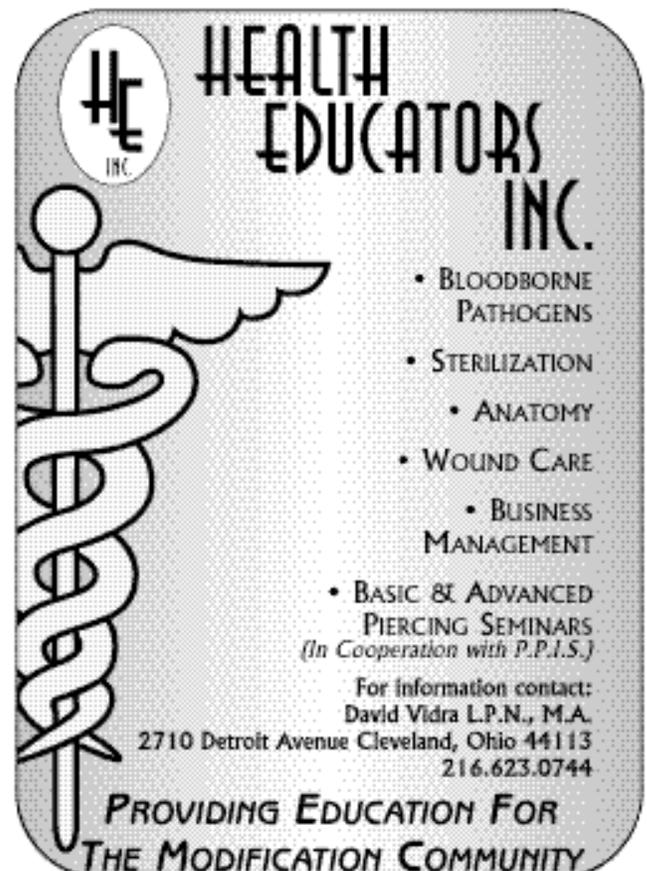


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**PROVIDING EDUCATION FOR THE MODIFICATION COMMUNITY**

I want to talk about how and why the APP was formed, and how it has changed over the years, activating our "voice." I also want to tell you why you should apply, even if you don't think you are ready.

The APP began about 7 years ago, launched by piercers, mostly in the state of California. They united to help guide the passage of State Legislation regarding piercing (recently passed, but enforcement is still pending!). For this to take place, a number of the piercers had to join with competitors for the good of their mutual industry and continued business. As a result of the piercers coming together, sharing of information about our unique and specialized field began.

Because of this collaboration, piercing as a genuine professional enterprise began to congeal and to grow and continues to develop. As an industry we now have standardized aftercare, minimum appropriate jewelry specifications, much printed educational and informational literature. And, perhaps most importantly, the APP has a VOICE.

What do I mean by a voice? Well, hardly ever a week goes by that I do not get a call from a newspaper or magazine reporter for an interview about body piercing. As frequently I am contacted by government officials requesting informa-

tion to establish or update a law. They want to know what the APP is about, what we stand for, and how to get more information. There are few laws or regulations in which the APP has not participated or had somewhat of a voice.

Eventually they always ask the one question I hate. That question is, "How many members do you have?" It is because of the answer to this question that the APP initially loses a little respect. That is until I begin to explain the exacting requirements for membership and that we will not lower our standards to generate a larger member base. It is at this point that they realize the true legitimacy of our small yet elite collective, and that we are a very professional organization. They trust us to give them accurate and appropriate information.

While all this is going on I'm looking on the APP web site to give them the name and number of the closest member. If we have a member in proximity I invite them to stop by to see that shop. I suggest they then visit other piercers in the area. With confidence I tell them that they will see a difference.

I can't help but wonder what our members will say as they see more and more piercers become APP members. It is happening, and it means we will have a more formidable presence and an even more

esteemed organization. We may be admired for our stringent requirements, but there is no doubt that the more members the APP has the more stature we will have, and the better recognition we will receive.

I want to congratulate and thank all the members who have asked us for help, and to invite other piercers to do the same.

I want to encourage all the piercers out there to apply. I keep hearing from piercers "I'm not ready" or "I'm still making changes." My response to this is to send in your video and let us help you get ready.

What many people don't know is that most studios are not approved the first time they apply. This is no cause for disgrace. When I applied 5 years ago I was denied and asked to change a few things. I didn't completely understand why at the time, but now I do. So don't be afraid: APPLY. We are here to support you, and assist your advancement and improvement, not to criticize you.

Please read over the APP's newest brochure "The Benefits of Membership," send in your application and video. Help make the piercing community better and stronger. Have a bigger voice in what is happening in the world of piercing by becoming an APP member!

Thanks to all of you who attended  
and to all the vendors who participated in  
the 2001 APP Conference and Exposition.  
We will review the event in the next issue of The Point.

There are a few items in the kit that require a more detailed explanation. The first is the 16 gauge piercing needle which is a hollow point needle that is razor sharp. The size of the needle (16 gauge) is relevant because the 18 gauge jewelry is smaller. This is likely to promote unnecessary bleeding. In professional settings the piercing is generally done with a needle of the same gauge, reducing likelihood of bleeding. This size discrepancy is evidently to provide the inexperienced piercer with a larger needle into which the jewelry fits, making it easier to follow the jewelry into the new piercing.

Additionally, they describe it as a "Pre-lubricated" needle. This is problematic because, to be properly sterilized, the needle must withstand temperatures over 250 degrees. This would cause the lubricant to melt and spread throughout the package, getting the entire needle slippery, and not just the tip. Pre-lubricating a needle prior to sterilization is not an accepted procedure in the professional piercing community.

They advise cleaning the area with the alcohol swab prior to piercing. This is also not accepted practice. Betadine or other surgical scrub (commonly TechniCare) is used by professionals to more thoroughly remove potential pathogens from the site prior to piercing. Further, there is no mention of marking the tissue for placement prior to the piercing, which is the method for safe, accurate piercing. This omission could result in dangerous placement of the piercing, particularly so close to the delicate orbital region.

Also of great concern is the possibly deadly potential for the needle to be reused on multiple people. There are also dangers for accidental needle sticks to others, since no instructions are included for appropriate disposal

of the used needle.

The Neosporin package clearly states that it is not to be used for puncture wounds. Ointment creates an ideal environment for harboring bacteria in the new piercing. Also, the loose q-tip has the opportunity to collect numerous forms of contamination while rolling around in the package.

I have included a copy of the instructions from this company that come with the kit for piercing an eyebrow. There is no mention made of wearing gloves (which is part of the law in states where regulation exists) or even washing one's hands. It also doesn't provide information about when to remove the clamp. Any professional piercer can confirm that these are all vital aspects of safe, successful piercing.

There are several issues regarding the piercing kits that are especially dangerous. It is important to understand that much piercer education and training is necessary in order to perform a safe, sterile, and non-damaging piercing. The "piercing kit" industry is one that needs to be regulated in order to ensure the safety of our citizens. Young people are particularly at risk because minors (without parental consent) are denied professional piercing services in virtually all states where legislation has passed. The lack of regulation on piercing kits leaves them as a dangerous but available option to minors.

Through legislation, many states allow body piercing that is performed only by a trained, licensed professional in an environment that provides hospital sterilization and submits itself to health department inspections. Most states (37) currently have legislation regarding personal criteria for the piercer, requirements for the piercing establishment, and highly specific laws necessitating parental consent for the piercing

of minors. The laws and guidelines, along with the efforts of the professional body piercing community provide those interested in receiving a body piercing with a safe, clean environment to do so, and a technician to perform the piercing who has appropriate training and sufficient experience to be hygienic and proficient.

The nature of the piercing kits do not allow for any of these safety measures to take place. The kits can be purchased by anyone, which is the most relevant aspect of the eminent danger of piercing kits. These kits are not purchased by licensed, experienced professional piercers. They simply are not economical for those who can purchase piercing supplies at wholesale prices. The people purchasing these piercing kits are not licensed, experienced professionals who are operating in state approved facilities. This fact alone should greatly alarm all those who generated and approved the legislation to prohibit this type of danger.

As professional piercers and concerned citizens, we want to keep the art of body piercing safe for all who give and receive piercings. We take our field seriously and understand that the risks can be substantially minimized with proper training, equipment, and sterilization. Below is a response that a fellow professional piercer received from one of the suppliers of piercing kits. It was in reply to a letter of concern about the dangers of unsafe piercing from kits. You will undoubtedly see that care and concern for safety are not expressed by the vendors of piercing kits.

Please take the time to make this issue a priority in your legislative agenda and help protect our young people and citizens from the unnecessary risks that these piercing kits promote.

Attachment 1 Reply to message from professional piercer Nate Sextella from coolpiercings.com

From: Webmaster@CoolPiercings.com  
To: Nate Sexstella  
Sent: Tuesday, December 19, 2000 6:31 PM  
Subject: Re: What is wrong with you!

Hey... you just keep doing your "professional" piercing and work, work, work. We, on the other hand, will sell piercing kits that we do not design, manufacture, or put together, and we will get rich doing it. When we are all retired at the age of 27 we might just stop by your place and say hi!

Oh, and technically, if you have kids you better keep them out of the kitchen. It is very dangerous with knives being readily available, and your kid may accidentally cut himself due to carelessness. The end result could be rejection and/or infection, an ugly scar, and also, if untreated, could lead to blood infections and then lead any number of problems (sorry for any typos in that statement. Don't think I am of small intellect, just know that I copy and pasted the majority of it from a brain-dead professional that emailed me just to let me know just how stupid he really is)! The nice thing about this coming and going thing you mentioned... at least when we go it will be with a bank account full of money. How much does body piercing pay these days?!?

One last comment: You really seemed to get worked up over the fact that these people can now pierce themselves instead of coming to you and having you do it for them. This really seems funny to me because when I consider the fact that about 85% of the people purchasing these kits are doing so in hopes that they might pierce their genitals in the privacy of their own home, which makes you very angry leading me to only one conclusion: You've gotta be one of those guys that likes there job way too much. Perhaps you should have considered becoming a gynecologist. Well, on the other hand, there might not be a big demand for brain-dead gynecologists that get there jollies off of fondling unsuspecting patients. You know, what you have is an actual disease which can be treated with therapy. If you would like I can get you a list of local clinics in your area so that you can seek treatment.

Get me your address so I can get you that list of clinics.  
Later,  
CoolPiercings.com

Attachment 2 Piercing instructions for "Piercing your eyebrow" from coolpiercings.com

Basic Instructions:

When piercing the eyebrow with the Body Piercing Kit we offer, use the sterile alcohol swab to clean off the area to be pierced. Use the clamp provided to clamp the portion of the eyebrow of eyebrow you want pierced between the holes on the clamp. You don't have to clamp very tightly, just enough to make sure that the skin is held from moving. Once clamped, press the piercing needle through the holes on the clamp, piercing the skin clear through to the other side. Now, with the needle still piercing the skin, open the Ball Closure Ring and thread it through the hole behind the needle as you remove the needle. Once the needle is removed and the Ball Closure Ring is in, close the ring with ball. With everything in place, use the q-tip to apply the Neosporin to both sides of the newly pierced eyebrow

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Attachment 3 - Petition

**We, the undersigned, fully support the above document regarding legislation and regulation of companies selling piercing kits. We are interested in providing everyone with a safe, clean environment for body piercing that is performed by a trained professional piercer.**

**Name**

**Address**

**Signature**

-----  
\*Please return signed petitions by July 1, 2001 to  
Aaron Franko  
Ink Factory Tattoos & Body Piercings  
406 2nd St.  
Hudson, WI 54016

## Junk Jewelry

The quantity of companies now engaged in producing low-quality, inexpensive (downright cheap in every sense of the word) body jewelry is astounding. Nearly daily I receive a new catalog or two from a new company hoping to turn a quick buck on the current popularity of piercing. The range of styles is tremendous. The catalogs feature flashy, (sometimes literally-with navel and tongue jewelry that has batteries or glow sticks) eye-catching, and largely impractical designs.

Anyone with a shallow or healing navel piercing who tries one of those 2"-wide moon-and-star navel shields is going to be sorry! Clearly the designers and manufacturers of much of this jewelry have NEVER had a body piercing or tried to wear any of these creations.

Every head shop, trendy fashion retailer plus haircuts and futons and body piercings shop now carries an array of cheap, shoddy, showy body jewelry.

So, here's the dilemma: customers are chomping at the bit to buy this cheap junk; you could make some money selling it. So, should you do? The best advice is to stand your ground and provide only top-notch jewelry. If you feel a need to carry some of the fun, young, trendy styles set about finding a quality version. Maybe you could get some bars that are actually internally tapped with those fun and fanciful ends: smiley faces, 8-balls, stars, moons, clovers....

The bad news is that virtually every catalog I have seen with these types of items has all externally threaded jewelry. If you are a conscionable APP member, you wouldn't wear that low quality in your own body, and you won't put it in anybody else's body either. Those external threads really ARE like a tiny file passing through the tissue. Ick!

Take the time to educate your customers. Demonstrate the difference between internally and externally threaded jewelry (keep samples of the inferior stuff on hand for comparison). Generally, once the difference in function and practicality is observed by the customer, they won't want the second-rate schlock anymore.

If piercing professionals don't succumb to the junk jewelry temptation, and request and require only well-made, safe, high caliber body jewelry, then some manufacturers are bound to get the message. Stand your ground and sell and insert only the good stuff; your customers will ultimately thank you, and they will be back for more.

Elayne Angel

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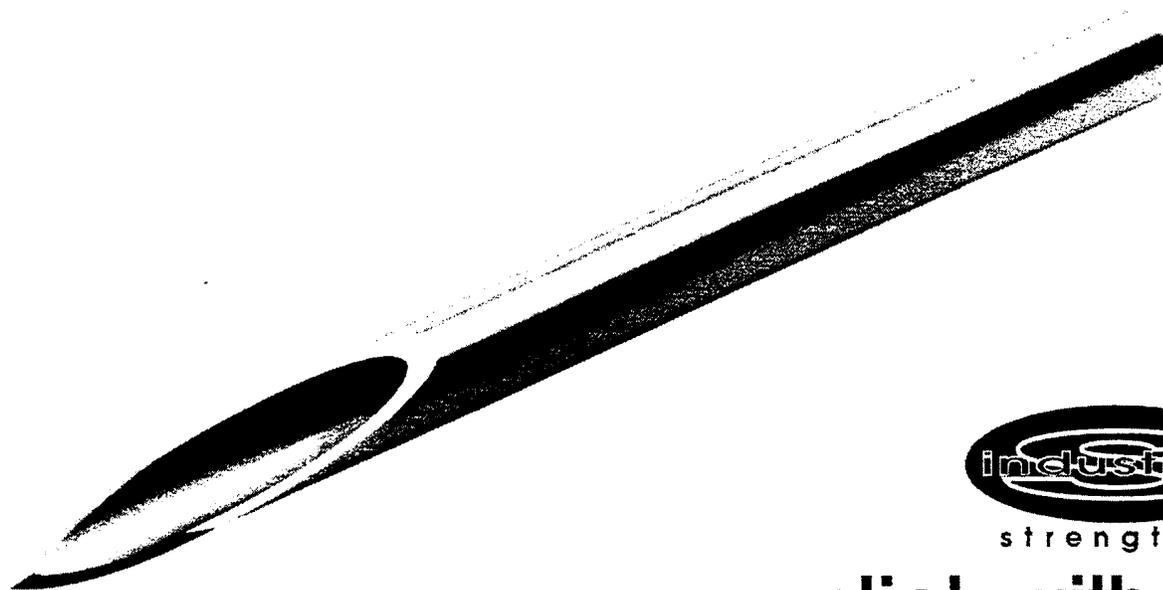


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