



Body Art: Tattoo & Piercing

www.BoulderCountyBodyArt.org



What to look for in a Body Art Facility

Body art is an invasive procedure in which the skin is punctured or compromised. Contaminates or pathogens can invade the body through punctured skin. Poor sanitation practices, such as improperly sanitized instruments or lack of hand washing, can lead to infection or transmission of communicable diseases such as hepatitis B and hepatitis C.

By asking questions and observing how a facility operates, you can help reduce your risk for complications arising from body art procedures.

1. **Ask to see their license.** All body art facilities operating in Boulder County are required to be licensed by Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) and to have their license on display. Also, all operators are required to have blood-borne pathogen training. Ask to see their certificates.
2. **Every facility should be recording spore information.** An autoclave is an instrument for sterilizing equipment. Every facility sterilizing equipment onsite should have one, and it must be operational. A third party should be ensuring the autoclave is working effectively by conducting a spore test once a month; ask to see their most recent results.
3. **All instruments used in a procedure must be sterilized in peel packs.** A peel pack is a bag that is clear plastic on one side and stiff paper on the other. A color change strip on or in the peel pack can tell you if the instrument inside was sterilized at the proper time and temperature.
4. **Any machines used in the procedure that cannot be sterilized must be clean and disinfected.** Tattoo machines and ear piercing guns do not come in contact with the skin, but they must be clean and disinfected before and after each use.
5. **Proper disinfectants must be used.** The label of a disinfectant will tell you what it can destroy. The disinfectant should be able to destroy Hepatitis B and HIV.
6. **The operator should demonstrate clean technique.** This involves the operator washing their hands, wearing gloves, not touching dirty surfaces during the procedure, and ensuring sterilized instruments are not compromised. When handling a sterilized instrument, an operator that touches a dirty surface must remove their gloves, wash their hands, and put on new gloves.
7. **Review past inspections when considering a facility.** BCPH publishes recent sanitation inspection records on this website. Even with a perfect record at the time of inspections, body art should be considered a procedure that involves some risk. By selecting a facility with a strong track record, you may be reducing, though not eliminating, that risk.

If you have any questions about body art facilities in Boulder County, please call the Boulder County Public Health Body Art program at 303-441-1567.



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