



Contact: Megan Hummel, Public Affairs Specialist
Phone: 513-946-7808
E-mail: megan.hummel@hamilton-co.org
For Immediate Release: July 22, 2010

Health Commissioner Column

TATTOOS AND PIERCINGS MAY COME WITH SERIOUS HEALTH SIDE EFFECTS

HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO – Tattoos and body piercings are increasingly popular, yet anyone considering a tattoo or piercing should be aware of health risks and take precautions to avoid serious health side effects.

State law requires all tattoo and body piercing establishments, including those for cosmetic permanent make-up, to be licensed by their local health department. The law is designed to ensure that these procedures are done in a way that minimizes the transmission of communicable diseases and the risk of infection. People who visit unlicensed facilities (e.g. residential homes, tattoo parties, craigslist advertisements, etc.) face serious health consequences, ranging from local skin infections to blood-borne illnesses such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV. Additionally, employees of tattoo/piercing facilities are required to be trained in first aid, control of transmission of infectious disease, universal precautions against blood-borne pathogens and appropriate aftercare.

Hamilton County Public Health inspects tattoo and body piercing establishments to ensure safe and sanitary conditions are being maintained. The most recent inspection reports can be viewed at www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org.

When choosing a tattooing or body piercing establishment:

- Request to see a copy of the establishment's current operating license. The license should be readily available and posted at the facility.
- Make sure the establishment looks clean and a restroom facility is available to customers. Look for proper lighting within the establishment.
- Verify that the artist's first aid and blood-borne pathogen training documents are available and up-to-date. Look for previous work done by the artist. Check for pictures on the wall or a binder/portfolio with photos of work that the artist has done.
- Prior to beginning any procedure, the artist should wash their hands with soap and water in a nearby sink.
- Make sure the artist uses brand new, disposable needles and razors, ink caps, and a new, clean pair of sterile gloves for each piercing or tattooing client. All items should be used only once.
- The artist should clean the skin before tattooing or piercing.

NEWS

- Make sure you are given detailed follow up instructions and follow them exactly as written.

Parents should understand and talk to their children about the consequences of tattoos and body piercings. Not all establishments choose to tattoo those under the age of 18. The State of Ohio requires a parent or legal guardian to be present when anyone under the age of 18 receives a tattoo or body piercing. Additionally, Hamilton County Public Health requires a state issued driver's license, state ID or birth certificate for both individuals.

If you have questions about tattoos or body piercings, please contact us at 513-946-7879 or visit our Web site at www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org.

#

Tim Ingram is the Health Commissioner for Hamilton County. Hamilton County Public Health works to assure the 450,000 citizens living outside the cities of Cincinnati, Norwood, Sharonville and Springdale are safe from disease, injury and contamination.