This brochure explains some of these things.

**WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF GETTING HEPATITIS C OR HIV FROM A TATTOO OR PIERCING?**

Hepatitis C and HIV are two viruses that can be passed from person to person when the blood or other body fluids of one person enters and gets into the bloodstream of another person.

Because tattooing or piercing involves breaking the skin, it is possible for blood to get into the bloodstream of another person when the blood of someone with Hep C or HIV gets into the bloodstream of another person. This is called the transfusion route. There is also the route of the “dirty needle.” This route can happen if someone uses a needle and other equipment (instruments) that have blood on them, and they share the needle and other equipment with someone else. 

**RATES OF HEP C AND HIV IN PRISON ARE HIGHER THAN IN THE GENERAL POPULATION.**

Rates of Hep C and HIV in prison are higher than in the general population. The overall rates in the general population in the US are: 1 in 80 for Hep C and 1 in 4000 for HIV. In Federal prison, it is important to do it as safely as possible. It is not currently possible to sterilize tattooing and piercing equipment properly. If equipment is being re-used and not sterilized properly, it can become a route for the transmission of infectious diseases.

**BEFORE YOU GET A TATTOO OR PIERCING CHECK OUT THE ARTIST’S PREVIOUS WORK**

Talk to other people who have had work done by this artist. Ask to see the artist’s work on someone else. Look at how long it takes the artist to work and how clean the work area is. Ask the artist to explain the equipment used. Ask to see the equipment used to make the tattoo or piercing. Also ask the artist to explain the aftercare instructions. Ask if the artist has prior experience in doing the type of work you want done.

**HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS?**

- Ask to see the artist’s work on someone else. Look at how long it takes the artist to work and how clean the work area is.
- Ask the artist to explain the equipment used to make the tattoo or piercing.
- Ask the artist to explain the aftercare instructions.
- Ask if the artist has prior experience in doing the type of work you want done.
- Get real India ink, which is less toxic to the body. If real ink is not available and ink needs to be made, have the artist make the ink in front of you to be sure it is fresh.
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- Charcoal mixed with water can also be used. Some people make ink by burning paper and mixing the ashes with lots of words printed on it. Some people make ink by burning paper and mixing the ashes with lots of words printed on it. Other substances other than paper to make ink, consider the risk of chemical burns. Also, if you are thinking about burning something, be careful.
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AFTER-CARE

TATTOOING

• The process raising the tattooing should wash their hands with soap and water before they start.
• Try to avoid clean and dress the work surface. If possible, the work surface can be covered with plastic wrap. The tattoo machine and cord can be covered with plastic wrap too.
• All equipment should be new or as clean as possible, including the table, tools, pots and water. The tattoo machine should be dry before starting. This includes after cleaning and disinfecting the area, any water, needle, ink or equipment that touches you, such as a tattoo machine or spot where the tattooing is happening. This includes after cleaning and disinfecting the area, any water, needle, ink or equipment that touches you, such as a tattoo machine or spot where the tattooing is happening.
• The area should be cleaned prior to use. (See “Cleaning used tattooing and piercing equipment safely”)
• The tattoo machine and cord can be covered in plastic wrap too.

• The work surface should be cleaned and disinfected.
• The person doing the tattooing should wash their hands with soap and water before starting.
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• If you experience bleeding that won’t stop, scarring, an infection, like a tattoo machine cord, or inflammation or nerve damage, seek medical attention.
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PIERCING AFTER-CARE

• The person doing the piercing should wash their hands with soap and water before they get started.
• The work surface should be cleaned and disinfected.
• The person doing the piercing should wash their hands with soap and water before starting.
• The person doing the piercing should wash their hands with soap and water before starting.

• The area around the tattoo will usually be tender, red and may have some swelling and will become increasingly tender during healing.
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• The only thing covering the piercing should be clean clothing.
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• The best time for the first wash of the piercing is the morning after the piercing. This is to give the wound a chance to start healing.
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• If you experience bleeding that won’t stop, scarring, an infection, like a tattoo machine cord, or inflammation or nerve damage, seek medical attention.
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• Try not to pick or tug at the piercing.
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• It is normal for a piercing to produce off-white fluid while it heals. This often forms scabs around the hole.
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• Do not expose any new piercing to the saliva or body fluids of other people until it has healed.
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• Wash the area around the piercing with soap and water once a day for the first two weeks after the piercing and then once a day after that.
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• You should dispose of the piercing needle. You should not be reusing the piercing needle. “Getting rid of used tattooing and piercing equipment safely”
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• If you don’t have cream, it’s best not to apply anything to the fresh tattoo and try to limit how much you move the tattooed area.
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• Preparing H and vitamin E. Over the next few days, you may have an infection and will tenderness, pain, greenish-yellow pus, rashes and fever.
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• If after a day or two the tattoo is bright red and irritated, you may have an infection and will tenderness, pain, greenish-yellow pus, rashes and fever.
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• You can keep using the cream, especially when the skin is dry and flaky.
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• Try to keep clothing clean and loose around the fresh tattooing.
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• If you experience bleeding that won’t stop, scarring, an infection, like a tattoo machine cord, or inflammation or nerve damage, seek medical attention.
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