Pushing It

Invasive body art is a hep C risk.

February 26, 2015 By Kate Ferguson

According to results from a recent Harris Poll, 49 percent of Americans have pierced ears. What's more, 7 percent say they have a piercing elsewhere on their body and 4 percent report they have a facial piercing not on their ear. But no matter where a piercing is located, those who opt to rock this type of body art also place themselves at risk of acquiring hepatitis C, a disease caused by a virus that infects the liver.

Piercings can transmit the virus if any instrument used to create this body art isn't sterilized or disinfected, before it is used on another client. In addition, sharing body-piercing jewelry can transmit microscopic traces of infected blood that may linger on these accessories.

That's why the Association of Professional Piercers suggests you only get work done by a licensed professional. What's more, check the business's autoclave (a device that sterilizes body-piercing jewelry, tools and equipment). Also ask piercing pros to show you the results from a spore test that confirms the autoclave's ability to kill HCV and other dangerous organisms. And watch the piercer set up for your session. If possible, piercers should use supplies only once, says the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What's more, piercers should wash reusable instruments or devices before thoroughly sterilizing them in properly maintained machines.

Finally, piercers should wash and glove their hands before beginning a session, and experts suggest they not use an ear gun to do the job.

© 2026 Smart + Strong All Rights Reserved.

http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/hep-c-body-art-26867-2561