

Anyone who is considering a tattoo should seriously consider the health risks and the long-term effects associated with tattoos. Most importantly, you should get a tattoo from a reputable facility that is licensed and inspected by the Oklahoma State Health Department. Employees at licensed establishments are trained to insure that procedures are done in a way that minimizes the transmission of communicable diseases and the risk of infection. Follow these guidelines to prevent infection while your tattoo heals:

**DO:**

- Always wash your hands thoroughly before touching the tattoo.
- Gently wash your tattoo with your bare hands, then pat dry and apply a thin layer of the ointment or lotion recommended by your tattoo artist three times a day for one-two weeks.
- Keep the tattoo fresh and open to the air after the bandage has been removed, but keep it protected with clothing until it heals.
- Consult with your healthcare provider if an allergic reaction and/or infection occur. Signs of a possible infection include the following: excessive soreness, tenderness, redness, drainage, swelling or pain at tattoo site.

**DO NOT:**

- DO NOT re-bandage your tattoo after removing the bandage according to your tattoo artist's instructions.
- DO NOT submerge the tattoo in water (i.e., hot tubs, lakes, bathtubs, pools) until it is healed.
- DO NOT pick scabs, or rub or scratch your tattoo while it heals, although it may be very itchy.
- AVOID excessive sun exposure or tanning beds until tattoo is completely healed. After your tattoo is healed, sun exposure can fade the tattoo, so use sunblock when it may be exposed to the sun.
- DO NOT wear tight clothing over the tattoo until it is healed.
- DO NOT use lotions or moisturizers with oils or fragrances.

**Make sure you are given detailed follow up instructions and follow them exactly as written. Aftercare is very important to prevent infection and promote healing.**

*Resources:*

[www.milwaukee.gov/bodyart](http://www.milwaukee.gov/bodyart)

[www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org](http://www.hamiltoncountyhealth.org)

[www.safe-tattoos.com](http://www.safe-tattoos.com)

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Acute Disease Service

Oklahoma State  
Department of Health

For further information call or visit us on the World Wide Web  
Acute Disease Service  
Oklahoma State Department of Health  
Phone (405) 271-4060  
<http://ads.health.ok.gov>