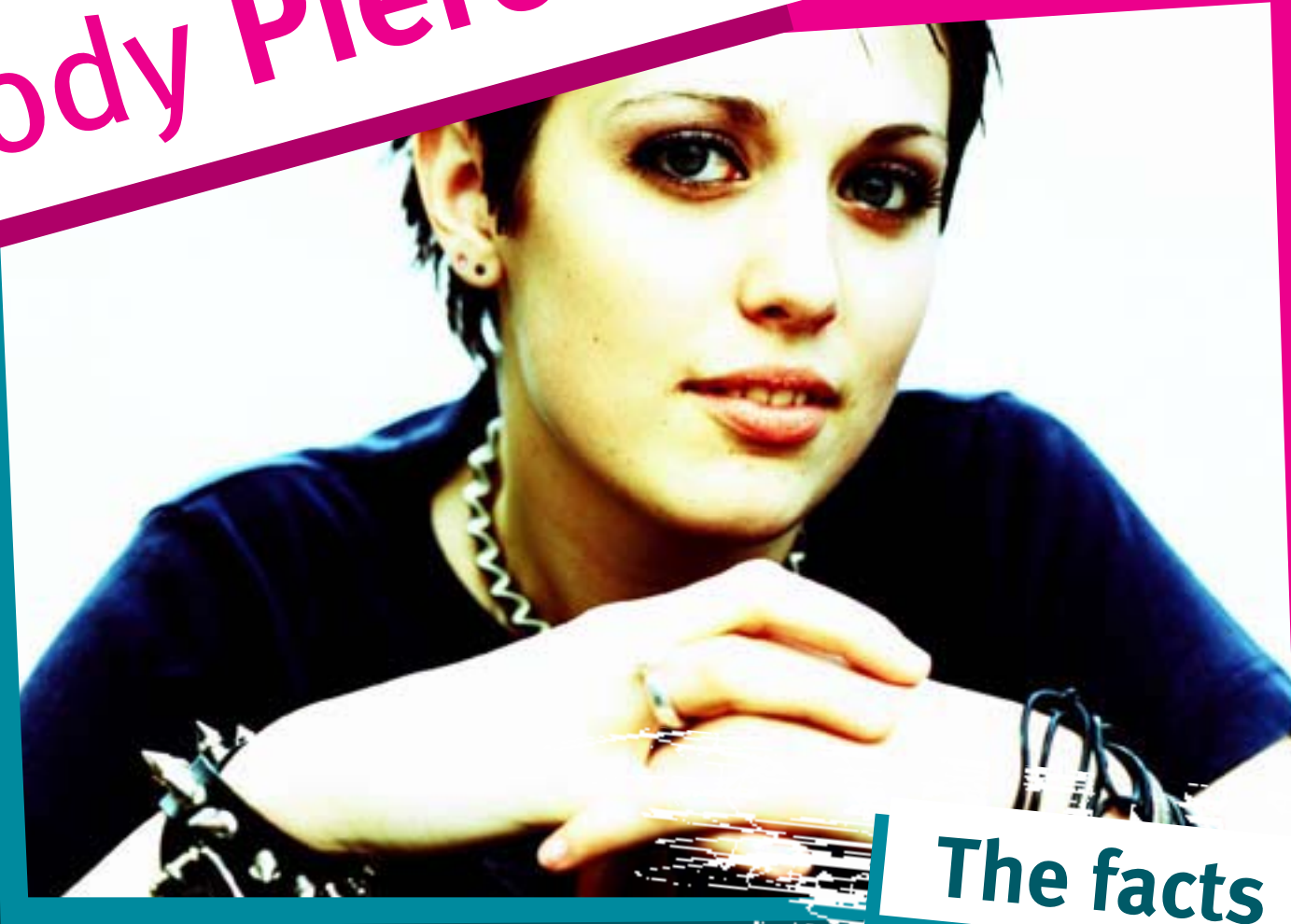


# Body Piercing



## The facts



## What is body piercing?

Body piercing is now the fastest growing form of body art in Australia and Queensland. Body piercing is the process in which holes are made in the skin with a sharp instrument to allow jewellery to be worn. It is important to remember all forms of body art pose a risk of infection.

## What are the risks?

If body piercing is not done properly you can suffer nerve damage, scarring or infection. Blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis C, hepatitis B, HIV (the virus that can lead to AIDS) and a range of bacterial infections can be passed on by contaminated equipment, unclean premises and unsafe products.

## How should I prepare myself for a piercing?

- Don't get a piercing if you are sick. Being unwell will slow the healing process and increase the risk of local infection.
- Don't drink alcohol for 24-hours before a procedure. Alcohol in your bloodstream tends to increase bleeding during a procedure.

## Questions for the artist...

Finding a responsible artist is crucial to avoiding discomfort and infection. Make sure to ask:

- Are the premises licensed by the local council?
  - Is the licence displayed in a visible spot and is it current?
  - Does the person doing my procedure have an infection control competency qualification?
  - Get the artist to explain the procedure.
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- If you are considering multiple piercings, start with a small one to see how you manage the procedure and its care.
  - If you want to use your own jewellery for piercing, take it to the studio the day before to be checked and sterilised. Remember, jewellery you buy from places other than body piercing studios will not be sterile and may not be of suitable quality or size.

## Also, make sure the artist...

- is operating from a clean and hygienic studio
- can answer any questions about their experience and infection control procedures
- asks about any personal health matters which could indicate that you should not be pierced
- outlines any potential risks, complications and healing times
- washes their hands and puts on new disposable gloves before starting your procedure and following any interruption in the procedure where gloves may have been contaminated
- uses new needles and other equipment for skin penetration and throws them out immediately after using them
- has everything that is used to penetrate your skin in sterile, sealed bags that are opened in your presence
- cleans and disinfects the piercing site
- encourages a return visit so the healing process can be checked.

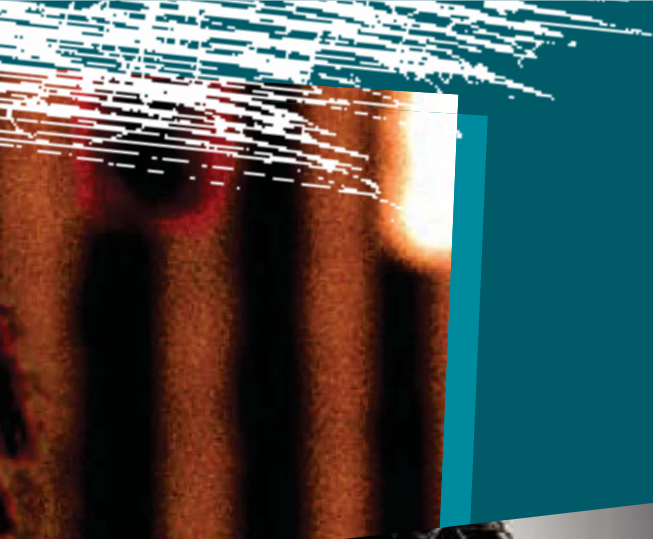


## Will I need my parent's consent?

While there are no laws requiring parental consent for general piercings, it is a good idea to discuss body piercing with your parents before it is done.

It is illegal for businesses to carry out body piercing of the nipples or genitals of minors, even if the parent/guardian has consented to the piercing.





## Are there laws that cover body piercing?

The *Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003* includes regulation of the body piercing industry.

The Act requires businesses providing skin penetration procedures – this includes all procedures other than closed ear or nose piercings that are done with a single-use disposable cartridge – to be licensed and persons who provide these services to hold an infection control qualification.

In Queensland, licences for body piercing and other similar services are issued and monitored by local government.

For more information contact your local council. If you have a reaction to your procedure, consult your local GP.