

Industrial Ear Project Aftercare Information

Primary Suggestions



Anti-bacterial Soap

The optimal way to care for your piercing is to clean it twice daily (If you are physically active, try to schedule your cleanings after you exercise). The easiest and most comfortable way to clean your piercing is either during or immediately following a hot shower. The hot water and steam will help soften your skin and loosen the crust at the base of your jewelry (making it easier to remove). While in the shower, wash your hands thoroughly with anti-bacterial soap—preferably a medical grade soap such as Provon or Satin. (Beware: anti-bacterial soaps containing fragrances can irritate your piercing or cause allergic reactions.)

Next, gently remove the crust from your jewelry with a disposable, one-use product such as a tissue, cotton-ball, swab, or square. (Do not use a hand towel because bacteria can lie dormant in the cloth.) Then, place some anti-bacterial soap in your hands and rub them together as to create a nice lather. Gently wipe the jewelry and your piercing with the tips of your fingers, being careful not to scratch or irritate the area. Once the jewelry and piercing are lathered with soap, spin the jewelry so that the ball on the jewelry rests on one hole of your piercing; then, spin it so that the ball rests on the opposite hole. This process will help run some soap into the wound, helping to ward off bacteria. After spinning the jewelry back and forth several times, rinse the area and jewelry thoroughly while continuing to spin the jewelry back and forth. (Tip: Do not place your piercing directly into the shower's streaming water. Instead, try to redirect the water with your hands in order to reduce the intensity of rinsing.) If your starter jewelry is not a captive bead ring or circular barbell, try your best to perform the above process without overworking and irritating the area.

Sea Salt Soaks

After completing the above process, you can perform your sea salt soaks either in or out of the shower. First, fill a fresh disposable cup with approximately 8 ounces of water and add ¼ teaspoon of sea salt, stirring until it is dissolved. When ready, either place the cup over the piercing—forming a vacuum-type seal—or dip the piercing into the cup. If either of these techniques is not possible, pre-soak a fresh tissue, cotton-ball, swab, or square in the sea salt solution and firmly press it on your piercing. In order to promote effectiveness, the first sea salt soak should last at least 10 minutes. All additional soaks should last at least 5-10 minutes. Following the sea salt soak, pat your piercing and jewelry dry with a fresh disposable paper or cotton product.

Ibuprofen

For those who are extremely sensitive, an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen (Motrin IB, Advil, etc.) can help reduce swelling and pain.

Additional Tips

According to piercing-friendly physician Dr. Janet L. H. Keating with the Duke University Student Health Service, one of the best ways to care for and heal a piercing is to “promote healthy lifestyle habits.” Some additional tips for this include:

1. Remember: A piercing is a wound. Consequently, you should expect tenderness, swelling, discoloration, and possibly bruising, bleeding, and itching. Also, a natural part of the process for healing any wound includes the secretion of a white-yellow fluid (containing dead cells and blood plasma). This fluid will dry and form crust on your jewelry. To properly remove this crust, refer to the Primary Suggestions for healing your piercing.
2. Never touch your piercing without first washing your hands with anti-bacterial soap. This is a great way to avoid infections even after your piercing is healed.
3. Do not use petroleum-based ointments (e.g., Neosporin, Bacitracin, etc.), peroxide, alcohol, Betadine, iodine, and Hibaclense!! These substances can hinder and prolong the healing process.
4. Check the accessories (e.g., balls, gem-ends, dice, etc.) on your jewelry for tightness at least once a day. Make sure your hands are first cleaned with anti-bacterial soap!! Checking your accessories is something that you should make habitual throughout the life of your piercing. Remember: tighten all threaded accessories by turning them to the right (righty-tighty, lefty-loosy).
5. During the entire healing period, the jewelry should remain in place to act as a drain. If the jewelry is too large to allow adequate drainage, it could be replaced with a smaller size by a piercing professional. Removing your jewelry prematurely can cause an infected hole to close up, trapping an infection and leading to complications requiring a medical professional. If you feel that the normal secretion is turning into a thicker and darker discharge, please do not hesitate to contact your physician for more advanced treatment (e.g., antibiotics).
6. Always wear loose and clean clothing around your new piercing. Tight or unclean clothing can irritate or infect the piercing, possibly causing it to migrate.
7. Do not engage in rough activity that may threaten your piercing. Intense friction and pulling on a fresh piercing is a common way to trigger migration, a process in which the body “pushes” the jewelry out of the body.
8. Do not expose your fresh piercing to oral contact or other bodily fluids. Use protective barriers such as condoms, dental dams, and finger cots—even if you are in a monogamous relationship.
9. Do not expose your piercing to cosmetics such as make-up, hair styling products, lotion, etc. Cosmetics contain many different ingredients and can cause irritation and infection.
10. Eat nutrient-dense meals throughout the day and consider supplementing your diet with Vitamin C (3000 mg in mineral ascorbate form) and Zinc (120 mg for males and 60 mg for females). These supplements are most effective during the first 2-3 weeks of the healing process. If you are very active (e.g., work hard, partake in regular exercise, etc.) extra nutrient-dense meals and an additional multi-vitamin supplement may help keep your immune system working efficiently.
11. Drink plenty of fluids. 8-10 glasses of bottled or purified water are a good way to keep your body hydrated.
12. Try to get at least 8 hours of sleep a night. This is considered the optimal amount of sleep for the body. This will help your body heal as best as possible. If you are living in a high-stress environment, consider resting as much as you can in your down time.
13. Try not to sleep on your new piercing. This cause irritation and prolong the healing process.
14. Replace your bedding with clean sets of sheets, blankets, and pillow-cases as much as possible during the healing period.
15. Do not take out your jewelry for very long. Even a seemingly well healed piercing can close-up in a matter of hours.
16. Avoid going into a pool, hot tub, lake, etc. These types of water can be unclean and may induce infection.

Approximate Healing Period

Industrial Ear Project: 2 months to 1 year.