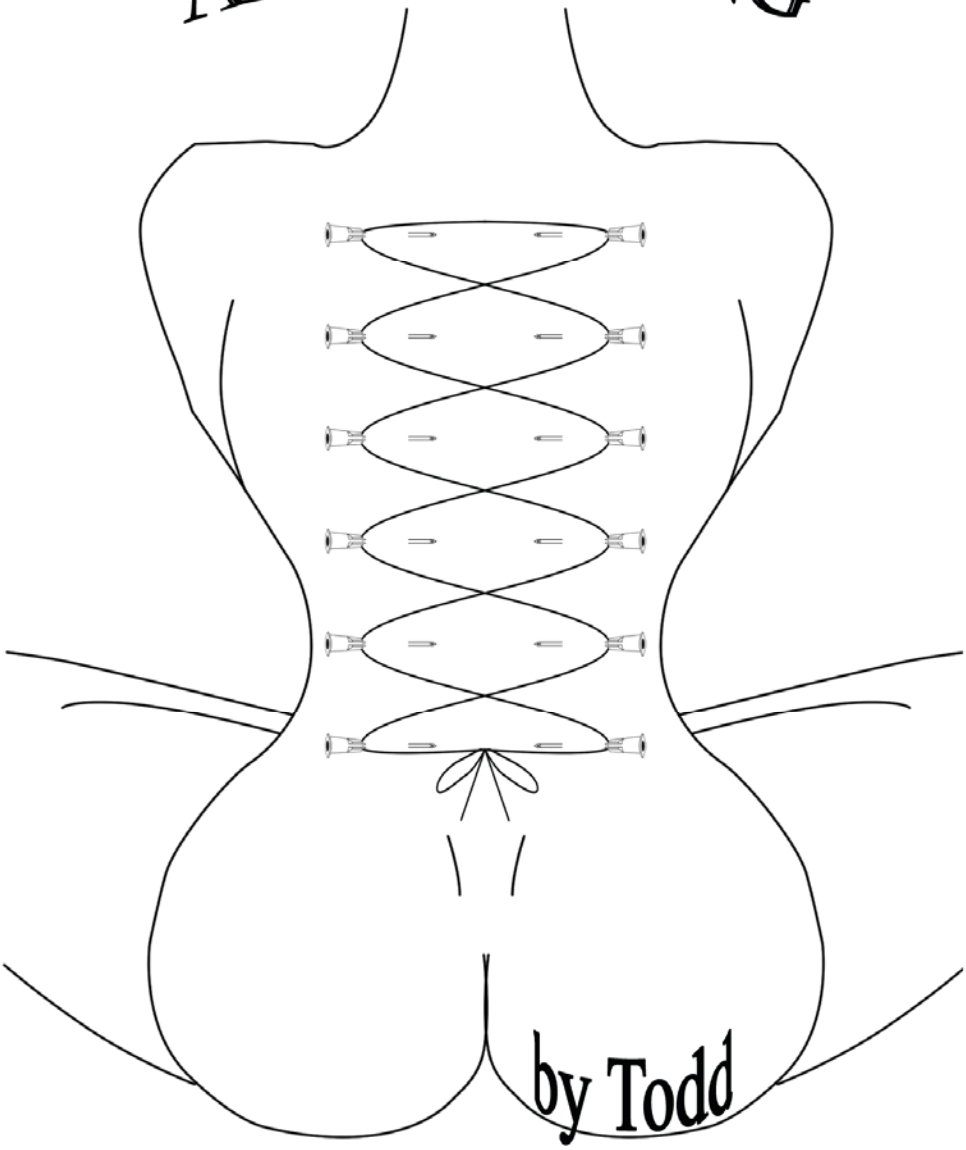
PLAY PIERCING AND BEADING



by Todd

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Questions or Comments?

I welcome any and all feedback about this booklet and presentations. Drop me, Todd, a line at todd@pervertslibrary.com.

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Foreward

This work is a discussion of play piercing. Be aware that I am neither a doctor nor a lawyer, so do not rely on this work for any medical or legal advice. If you have questions in those areas, seek out a qualified professional for answers. All of the activities described hereafter are potentially very dangerous. You and you alone are responsible for your own safety if you choose to engage in play piercing. Proceed cautiously and at your own risk.

What Is Play Piercing and Why Do It?

Play piercing, known in the body modification community as temporary piercing, is simply sticking hypodermic needles in and through the skin. Play piercing is also a form of blood play. If you sight of blood sickens you, play piercing is not for you.

Play piercing can take you through the entire range of human emotions and be sensual, cathartic, spiritual, erotic, and beautiful. Fortunately, it can also be about pain.

Skin Anatomy

You may not realize it, but the skin is the largest organ of the human body. Among the skin's functions are: serving as a barrier to protect the body from the external environment, regulating the body's temperature, keeping moisture from escaping, excreting waste via sweat, and (most importantly for us) transmitting sensations to the brain through the nervous system. Your skin also hosts a variety of microorganisms. We'll talk more about that later.

Without going into mind-numbing detail, the skin consists of three major layers depending on who's counting. The outermost layer is called the epidermis. This is the skin that is usually visible. The epidermis is a comparatively thin layer of skin that lacks blood vessels.

The layer below the epidermis is called the dermis. The dermis contains nerve endings, blood vessels, and oil glands. The dermis also supplies blood to the epidermis. The lowest layer of skin is the hypodermis or subcutaneous level and consists of fat cells, blood vessels, and nerve endings.[1]

Play piercing involves inserting a hypodermic needle into the skin through at least the top two layers of skin, epidermis and dermis. Depending on the depth of the piercing, the needle may also pierce through the subcutaneous layer of skin.

I have heard in piercing demonstrations that once a piercing needle enters the subcutaneous layer of skin there are no nerve endings to transmit pain sensations to the brain and consequently the bottom feels less pain. This is simply nonsense. Not only does the subcutaneous layer of skin contain nerve endings, but the presence of a foreign body, such a hypodermic needle, causes the body's lymphatic system to react and results in an increase in pain sensations.[2] While it is true that a piercing too close to the skin surface may hurt more than one deeper, this is generally because the shallow needle is pulling the skin surface.

When you pierce someone take care to not pierce muscle tissue as it produces the sort of pain that is never interpreted as "good" pain. This is true for the same reason that an intramuscular injection is typically more painful than a subcutaneous injection. Nerve cells in muscles are particularly sensitive to the presence of foreign bodies and generate an intense nervous system response. Also, the lymphatic system's response to a needle being inserted into muscle tissue is even more vigorous than its response to a needle entering subcutaneous tissue and further intensifies the nervous system response.[3]

Generally speaking, you can pierce any fleshy area of the body such as the back, torso, upper arms, thighs, and calves with a minimum of risk. Avoid skin areas that lack any "meat" between the skin and bones or any area that has nerve centers close to the skin surface. This includes the face, neck, elbows, knees, feet, and hands.

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[1] **Anatomy and Physiology: An Easy Learner** page 86, Sloane, Ethel, Jones & Bartlett Publishers, Inc., 1994.
[2] Interview with licensed MD. To protect both our confidentialities, this person will have to remain unnamed and you'll just have to take my word for it. Sorry.
[3] Ibid.

Skin Preparation for Play Piercing

Because the skin both hosts and protects us from so many potentially harmful microorganisms, a break in the skin can provide an opportunity for those organisms to enter the body. Before skin is pierced with a hypodermic needle, it needs to be treated with an antiseptic to lessen the risk of infection.

The two most common antiseptics for play piercing are povidone[4]-iodine and isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

Isopropyl alcohol is my personal favorite antiseptic because it is cheap, easily available, won't stain fabric, and is actually more effective than povidone-iodine at removing microbes from the skin.[5] Because alcohol removes the skin's natural oils, an alcohol soaked cotton ball will look dingy after it has been rubbed on skin.

Alcohol is drying to the skin and should not be used on mucus membranes. If you are applying alcohol on someone's back, watch out for drips as they almost always run down the spine and onto the anus. If that happens, not only is it painful for the bottom, you'll likely find yourself trying to pierce a squirming target - so be careful. Another thing to keep in mind if you are using alcohol in a scene is that it's highly flammable; be sure to exercise caution around candles or other open flames.

Povidone-iodine (marketed by Purdue Pharma L.P. under the brand name Betadine®) is another commonly used skin antiseptic in play piercing. It is also sometimes referred to as PVP. Several preparations of povidone-iodine are available, but I'll discuss the common 10% concentration of povidone-iodine suspended in water.

Povidone-iodine is reddish-brown in color. Skin treated with povidone-iodine changes color becoming brown or orange in appearance depending on a person's skin tone. Unlike alcohol-based antiseptics, povidone-iodine does not dry out the skin and is non-irritating to mucus membranes.

While the povidone-iodine residue will allow you to easily determine if you've missed any skin with the antiseptic, this color change is also the biggest drawback of using povidone-iodine as the color change isn't particularly attractive. You can remove povidone-iodine residue from the skin with rubbing alcohol after you remove the needles. You can also remove the residue with soap and water.

There is a common misconception that if someone is allergic to shellfish they will also be allergic to povidone-iodine. A recent literature review shows that this is not true.[6] [7] [8] However, at the risk of judging someone else's kink, I have never found the thought of someone going into anaphylactic shock particularly erotic. Since the benefits of using povidone-iodine do not outweigh the risks of an allergic reaction, it would be wise to avoid using povidone-iodine on someone who reports a shellfish allergy.

Regardless of which antiseptic you choose, avoid going over the same area twice with the same antiseptic pad. The standard technique for phlebotomists to prepare the skin for a needle insertion is to wipe it in a spiral starting from the center. While that works well if you need to prepare the skin for a single needle insertion, odds are you will be trying to prepare larger areas of skin for a scene. You can minimize skin recontamination by wiping in

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[4] Povidone is an abbreviation of polyvinylpyrrolidone, a chemical binder which allows iodine to be water soluble.

[5] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2002) *Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Health-Care Settings* MMWR Recommendations and Reports, October 25, 2002 / 51(RR16);45

[6] Briesemeister, E. and Burlingame, B.L. (2006) Disposal of epinephrine; shellfish and iodine allergies; fires caused by hair gel; patient jewelry; vaginal use of chlorhexidine gluconate. *AORN Journal,* February 2006: 479,481-484,486

[7] Coakley, F.V. and Panicek, D.M. (1997) Iodine allergy: an oyster without a pearl? *American Journal of Roentgenology*, Vol. 169, Issue 4 ; October 1997: 951-2

[8] Jelovsek, F.R. (2007) Does Iodine Allergy Mean a Shellfish Allergy Too?; retrieved July 10, 2007, from http://www.wdxcyber.com/ngen22.htm

one direction with a small amount of overlap between passes and repeating the procedure. Don't be shy about tossing away a used antiseptic pad and starting with a new one halfway through your skin preparation. Cotton balls and wipes are cheap, particularly when compared to the costs of doctor visits and antibiotics.

Hypodermic Needles

Hypodermic needles are packaged in paper and plastic. When they are manufactured, they are sterilized using gamma radiation and remain sterile until their expiration date[9] so long as the original packaging seal is left intact. Inside the packaging, the hypodermic needle is housed in a plastic shell called the casing or sheath. The needle fits snugly inside the casing and sometimes can be difficult to remove with gloved hands. Use caution to avoid an unintended needlestick when you separate the needle from the casing.

There are several parts to a hypodermic needle. The plastic end that attaches a needle to syringe is called the hub. The metal portion of the needle is called the shaft, and the point where it attaches to the hub is called the hilt. The hollow angled end is called the bevel (or bezel). The very sharp pointed end of a needle is called the tip or point. Finally, the hole that runs through the center is called the lumen.

Hypodermic needles are sized using wire gauge sizes and needle length. The larger the gauge size, the smaller the needle width. Needle gauge sizes are standardized by the International Standards Organization. Needles of the same gauge will be the same width regardless of their manufacturer. The length of the needle is the length of the needle's shaft and does not include the hub length.

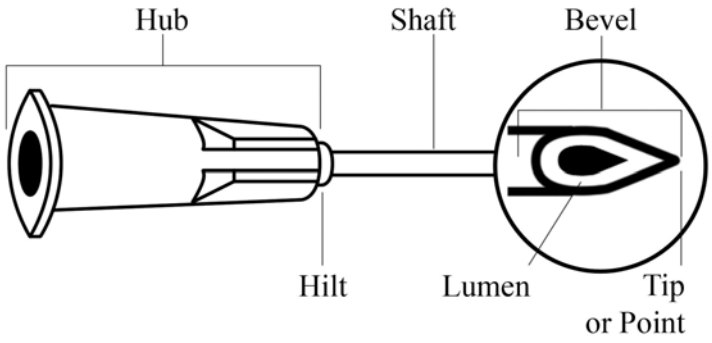

Figure 1: Illustration of Hypodermic Needle Parts

The most commonly used needle gauge sizes are from 20g to 25g. While the amount of pain inflicted by a needle is mostly correlated to its gauge size, needles smaller than 25g are actually so fine that they tend to warp as you insert them and cause more pain than a bigger (and stronger) needle.

The three major hypodermic needle manufacturers are Exel, Becton, Dickinson and Company (BD), and Terumo. While some folks swear by the products of different manufacturers, I haven't observed any substantial differences between them other than the different hub colors that each uses.

Depending on where you live, you may be able to purchase needles over the counter at a pharmacy. Needles can also be purchased via mail order.

Manufacturers use a color coding scheme so that all hubs of the same color represent the same gauge needle. Unlike needle gauges, there is no uniformity to color coding schemes and it varies from manufacturer to

[9] The expiration date of hypodermic needles is usually printed on the side of the box. If you purchase less than a full box of needles, make sure and ask when they expire.

manufacturer. You cannot judge a needle's gauge simply by looking at the hub. For example, a 25g BD needle has a bright blue hub while the hub on a 25g Terumo needle is orange. Another important thing to remember is that some hub colors can be easily confused with each other in the dim lighting found in most public play spaces, so it's important to read the packaging as you lay out your piercing supplies.

If you have needles from different manufacturers, you can use this hub color difference to great effect. Simply show the bottom the differently colored hub and menacingly announce that you are switching to these. Even if the bottom consciously knows that that the needles are the same size, they won't recognize it in their current headspace and will brace themselves for a bigger needle and more pain.

Whether or not a needle comes into contact with body fluid, it must be disposed of properly in a sharps container. Plastic bottles or other means of disposal are simply not adequate. Not only do these containers wind up in the landfill and represent a hazard to landfill workers, they also easily break and spill their contents anywhere and everywhere endangering everyone from children to homeless dumpster divers. If you are about to play with someone who doesn't think their responsibility is worth the $2-3 a sharps container costs, I hope you don't play with them.

Sharps containers are available at most pharmacies. Many hospitals, pharmacies, and other places accept full sharps containers and dispose of them at no cost.

Supplies and Preventing Fluid Transmission

Play piercing is blood play. When you play with needles, fluid transmission is a very real risk. Another thing to consider is that body fluid isn't the only risk associated with play piercing. There are any number of potentially harmful germs that live on your hands or on the tools that you use in piercing.

Personally, I love the feel and taste of blood – for me fluid exchange in play piercing is something to be celebrated, not avoided. But you may not feel that way or your partner might not feel that way, and you'll want to reduce the risk of coming into contact with any of the little nasties that exist in body fluid.

The best way to avoid coming into contact with someone else's body fluid (short of not piercing them) is to wear gloves throughout the piercing. Nitrile gloves are usually a better choice than latex gloves because some people are allergic to latex. Look for gloves that are powder-free as some people are allergic to the various powders used as lubrication.

Some people wear thimbles on their non-dominant hand to avoid needlesticks. Personally, the loss of dexterity makes me feel more prone to needlestick injury, but it's something you might want to consider.

Practicing

No matter how much I write, there's absolutely no way you will have any idea what it is like to pierce someone until you do it. Similarly, there is also no good way to gain experience and skill at piercing unless you pierce someone.

Chicken breasts with the skin attached and oranges were the recommendations I was given as good crash test dummies to practice play piercing. Frankly, not only does sticking a needle through my soon-to-be dinner seem silly, bragging about your prowess with a chicken breast and a needle isn't apt to inspire much confidence with that cute bottom you want to play with. Moreover, neither of those things reacts like a human being getting stuck with a needle.

If you want to practice play piercing and really get a feel for play piercing, there's no substitute for biting the bullet and piercing yourself. Your thigh makes a wonderful beginner's canvas. The first time you stick in a needle it is going to hurt a little (or maybe a lot), but I promise you'll learn very quickly how to make sure it doesn't. Another good thing about practicing on yourself is when your bottom whines that it hurts, not only can you gleefully tell them it doesn't hurt that bad, you will be telling the truth.

Before You Start Your Piercing Session

Make sure and lay out all the materials you will need for the entire piercing session before you begin. This includes all the materials you'll need for aftercare or for any "oops" you might experience[10] and a bag for any trash.

Start with a sterile drape and open any materials you'll need for your play session. Remember that even though the contents of a medical package are sterile, the package itself isn't, so if you lay a non-sterile container on your sterile field, the field is no longer sterile.

Don't forget to adjust the thermostat before you play. Pain processing is more difficult for the bottom if they are cold. Keep in mind that the bottom is likely (hopefully?) at least partially undressed and will be more sensitive to cold temperatures. Also, antiseptics cool the skin. A gentle massage before you start your play session in earnest not only warms the skin but provides a good opportunity to form a mind-body connection with your partner.

Before You Insert the Needle

So the little marks on your leg have healed, everything you need for your piercing session is laid out, you've prepared the bottom's skin, and gloved up – now you are ready to stick that first needle in, right? Not so fast! Before you proceed, listen to see if your bottom is breathing. Many bottoms, even ones who have played with needles before, tend to hold their breath in anticipation of the first needle. Talk to them and remind them to breathe. This is the perfect time to connect with the bottom. Make them laugh if you feel like it; laughter will reduce their stress and help them with pain processing. Touching may also reassure the bottom and will give you information about their stress and comfort levels.

Remember that unlike lots of other play, there isn't much warm up for play piercing. That makes the pain processing much different for the bottom; the first few needles will hurt more because there aren't any of our good endorphin friends running through the body. Take your time when you're beginning a scene and let the pace build slowly. Also, if you plan to use more than one size needles in a scene, start with smaller ones and work towards bigger needles[11]. If you plan to pierce more than one area of the body, start with a "meatier" area.

Some bottoms like to be told exactly when you are going to pierce them so they can brace themselves. A simple way to do that is to count to three and insert the needle. Other bottoms hate that and want you to stay quiet. Piercing is a lot like dancing – if you don't work together you'll bump heads and no one will enjoy it. Communicate and find out what works for you both.

Types of Piercing

There are two basic types of piercing that you can do with hypodermic needles.

[10] "Oh, Shit!" is a bad safeword for a top.
[11] There's nothing that says you can't go back to using smaller needles later if you want to.

The first, and least common, is a pincushion style where the needle is perpendicular to the skin. Needles measuring from a half inch to one inch work nicely for this purpose. Shorter needles may fall out because they don't have much flesh to anchor to, especially if the bottom moves. Observe the needles carefully to avoid a needlestick from a needle that has fallen out.

You should only perform this style of piercing on the meaty bits of flesh to avoid reaching muscle tissue or bone. Women's breasts are wonderful places to do this, but you may discover others depending on the bottom's body type. If you feel ambitious, you can lay out a simple design or play connect-the-dots.

The more common style of piercing involves inserting the needle parallel to the skin. To start, remove the needle from the casing and grip it by the hub with the thumb, index, and middle fingers of your dominant hand.

There are two positions that you can use for placing the needle: bevel up and bevel down. In the bevel up position, the needle's tip rests against the skin and the lumen is easily visible. Bevel down is the opposite of bevel up, the tip of the needle is away from the skin and shields the lumen from being seen. Some piercers prefer the bevel to be in the bevel down position, but bevel up is far more common. Bevel up has the advantage of giving you a better perspective of where the needle's entry point will be.

Now that you're ready to insert the needle, visualize where you want to insert the needle and move it there. You'll likely have to tip the needle so that it applies a small amount of pressure against the skin and creates a "ledge" to insert it into. Even though needles are sharp, you'll have to push a little to puncture the skin. When you insert the needle, push on the hub but don't twist it. Make sure that you guide the needle so that it follows a path parallel to the skin. You should be able to see a raise in the skin that gives you a good idea of where the tip is.

There are several options for what to do with the needle. You may want to simply insert the length of the needle under the skin and leave the tip under the skin. There's absolutely nothing wrong with that sort of piercing if you want to do it, however it's not commonly done.

More common in play piercings is to insert the needle inside the skin and press it back out so that the bevel is visible. You will want to use a needle that's at least an inch and a half long. The needle pressing back out is typically the most painful part of any piercing, so be ready for the bottom to move, cry out, or begin to breathe quickly as the needle works it way back through the epidermis.

One method to push the needle out back through the skin is to apply a tiny amount of down pressure on the hub so that the needle's tip moves toward the skin surface and then push it back through the skin. The other is to use the needle's casing to press down just outside the exit point to create another skin "ledge."

If you plan to leave the needles in and have the bottom move around, consider how the skin stretches and contracts with body position and movement. As the skin stretches, the needle's placement can move substantially and the needle's tip may be disappear under the skin. The skin's expansion and contraction is particularly pronounced if the bottom is in supine or prone position when they are pierced.

Another thing to consider if you plan to leave needles in the skin for prolonged periods is the needle's points. Exposed needle points are not only a hazard to other people, but can be a hazard to the bottom wearing them. The point of needles can be pressed into corks or hatpin clutches to shield the exposed tip. It's also possible to use an in-out-in technique and leave the needle's tip embedded under the skin. However, this requires the in-out portion to be relatively short and can be pulled out with normal movement.

Things to Do while Needles Are in the Skin

Just because you have finished inserting the last needle into the skin doesn't mean they can't provide skin sensation; you can do lots of interesting things with the needles and their hubs while they are in the skin.

For instance, you can insert feathers or flowers in the hubs and make decorations. You can also tweak the needles with your fingertips. Be gentle, it takes very little movement to get a great effect and not much more movement to tear the skin. You can alter the sensation of the needles by wrapping ribbon or small twine around the entry points and tightening, pulling, or both. Use caution when you're pulling on a single needle.

Another way to change the sensation of needles and make them decorative is a needle corset (see the front cover for an illustration). To make one, arrange the needles on the back or stomach evenly spaced in rows then lace them with ribbon or string in a fashion somewhat similar to lacing your shoes. Not only does that change the sensations the needles cause, it can be very beautiful.

You can play with the skin that's over and near a piercing. If you have several needles pierced in a neat row, gently roll a Wartenberg wheel over them. For a different sensation, turn the Wartenberg wheel over and use the handle. You can also use needle sheaths or fingers for this purpose or tap the skin with a dermal hammer. This is your scene, be creative.

You can take full advantage of the lumen and use it to embed string in the skin. More on that later.

Removing Needles

You can leave a needle in the skin for a couple of hours without any problems,but eventually you will have to take the needles out. This is much simpler than putting them in. Simply grasp the hub and pull the needle straight out without twisting. If you feel a slight resistance when you pull on the needle, it is probably because the skin has begun to heal around it. You can ease the removal by lubricating the needle with antibacterial ointment or Surgilube.

Lifting the hub slightly as you remove the needle forces the point to lower inside the skin and leads to more pain and bleeding.

Once you have freed the needle from the skin, immediately dispose of it by putting it point first in your sharps container. Don't recap the needle with the sheath. You can safely dispose of a needle sheath in the trash unless it is contaminated with blood.

After a needle is removed you may not see any marks in the skin, but may see a few drops of blood and/or a red mark where the needle entered or exited the skin. Larger amounts of bleeding are addressed in the Excessive Bleeding section.

When you've finished removing all the needles, clean the skin and wounds with an appropriate antiseptic. Rubbing alcohol works well for this. A mean, but neat, trick is to put your alcohol in a spray bottle and mist it over the freshly pierced skin before you wipe. Apply pressure to any wounds that are still bleeding until the bleeding stops.

If you want to avoid the pain that alcohol causes in piercing wounds, you can also use hydrogen peroxide to clean the skin after you play. Some people enjoy the way hydrogen peroxide bubbles when it comes into contact with blood, but there is some debate about whether hydrogen peroxide helps or hinders wound healing. You can also treat piercing wounds with povidone-iodine, but there also debate about its effectiveness in healing wounds[12].

[12] Drosou, A. , Falabella, A., and Kirsner, R (2003). Antiseptics on Wounds: An Area of Controversy. *Wounds*, Vol. 15, Issue 5; May 2003: 149-166

Aftercare

After you play, shower with soap and warm water to clean the skin. Exposure to air will speed the healing of most piercing wounds; antibacterial ointments and adhesive bandages will likely only delay healing. Generally speaking, most piercing marks heal within a week. In addition to the puncture marks, you may also notice small bruises near piercing sites. Watch for signs of skin infection (redness, swelling, pus). If you notice signs of an infection, seek professional medical attention.

Needlesticks

An accidental puncture with a needle that has come in contact with someone else's body fluid is called a needlestick. If you get a needlestick, remain calm. First, take off any gloves and wash the needlestick site with soap and water. Consult with your doctor to find out about getting tested for HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C.

It's possible you stuck yourself after the needle was removed, but odds are the needle that you stuck yourself with is still buried in someone else's skin. You can reduce the bottom's risk of being exposed to your body fluids by removing the needle without sliding the point back through the skin. To do this, push a cork onto the needle's point then cut the hub of the needle with diagonal cutters and remove the needle by pulling on the cork side. If you don't have diagonal cutters, you can also use EMT shears.

Excessive Bleeding

It's normal to see a few drops of blood when you remove a hypodermic needle because the needle has sliced through capillaries. Usually, the needle shaft and the body's clotting mechanisms stop the blood flow and you need only clean the skin. Occasionally after you remove the needle, you'll notice a small amount of bleeding from a piercing wound. Applying light pressure with an alcohol soaked cotton ball should be sufficient to stem the flow of blood.

If you notice a substantial amount of blood flow from a piercing wound when you remove a needle you've probably pierced through or clipped a larger blood vessel. Women's breasts, particularly if you pierce them near the nipples, are particularly prone to having this happen because they have many blood vessels near the surface of the skin.

When this happens, don't panic. If you enjoy playing with blood take a moment to enjoy the flow. You can smear the blood around and/or make a trail of bloody kisses to admire later. You can also dip your finger and write words on their skin or your own skin for that matter. If you do that, choose your words very carefully as some people's reaction to this can be psychologically explosive.

Don't get too distracted by your good time though, because you've got to treat the wound. Cover it with gauze and apply firm pressure to stop the bleeding. If blood soaks through the gauze, don't remove it. Instead, add a layer of gauze on top and continue applying pressure. Do this until the bleeding stops. Once the external bleeding stops, the vessel is still likely bleeding on the inside. You may feel a firm lump under the skin which is blood pooling. Treat it with ice to reduce the swelling. If you're the one being pierced you'll likely have a substantial bruise. Wear it with pride, you earned it.

Beading

Skin pierced with needles is beautiful. You can also use needles for skin beautification even after they are taken out by threading material through them and using that material to tie things to the skin. Because of its wide availability and ease of use, monofilament fishing line is well suited for this purpose.

Fishing Line for Use in Play Piercing

Fishing line varies widely in its construction. Some line is made of a single strand of material and is known as monofilament line. Other line is composed of multiple lines braided together much like a rope. There a several colors to choose from and which color you wish to go with is completely up to you. While there is no widely accepted industry standard for measuring fishing line, it is sold based on a weight strength test (a number followed by "pound test") that roughly corresponds to its diameter (the bigger the number, the thicker the line). Based on my experience, I would advise you to purchase 8 pound test monofilament as it is strong enough for beading, small enough to disappear against the skin, large enough to work with easily, and thin enough to fit through a 23g needle.

Typically monofilament fishing line is manufactured using a combination of extruded plastic resins. While this manufacturing involves heat and leaves the line theoretically germ free at the time of its manufacture, fishing line is not intended for use inside a human body. Consequently, using fishing line with needle play involves substantial risk. There are no if, ands, or buts about that. These risks include not only the increased risk of a skin infection, but also the risk of the body having an allergic reaction to the material, the risk of the material slicing the flesh, and others. Whether you are willing to assume this risk is a decision that you and your partner must make on your own.

Scary warnings aside[13], there are things you can do to minimize the risks associated with introducing fishing line into the body. First, when you purchase the line at the store look for line that is stored so that it stays clean and dry. Also, try to find line packaged in a way that minimizes how much it's been handled by other people. When you store your line keep it in a place where it won't be handled often and will stay clean and dry.

Because fishing line is not manufactured for use inside a human being, I remain unconvinced that it is possible to sterilize fishing line to surgical standards. However, I do believe that you can minimize the risks associated with using fishing line in the human body. To do that, you have to treat the line so that it is as clean and germfree as possible, and there are a few ways to go about that. You can soak the line in simple 70% rubbing alcohol for several minutes. I've used this method repeatedly and have yet to have any problems with it. However, I can't in good faith say that this was the result of anything but good fortune.

A better option for cleaning the line is Virkon®[14] which is manufactured the DuPont™ subsidiary Antec International™. DuPont markets Virkon in the United States as RelyOn™[15]. Virkon is a multi-purpose disinfectant against a wide variety of viruses, bacteria, and fungi. Because Virkon has low dermal toxicity[16], it presents few problems if used in the skin. To use Virkon, simply dissolve the tables in water. Virkon solution remains active for seven days and should be discarded if the pink color fades[17].

How to Attach a Bead Using a Hypodermic Needle

Threading fishing line through a needle is a relatively simple process. Even though a long length of fishing line is flexible, a 2-3 inch length is rigid enough to fit through the small hole in a hypodermic needle. Even though you won't be putting beads into the skin, they will come into contact with line that will eventually be inside someone's body, so sterilize them with the same care that you use to sterilize any fishing line you use. A bead used on someone will be contaminated with their body fluids, so don't reuse a bead on another person. However,

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[13] The last thing I want is for someone to say that I said threading fishing through needles is "safe." It isn't.
[14] Thanks to LadyShivers for teaching me about this product.
[15] *RelyOn MDC 1-2% Solution;* MSDS No. ANTEC08; DuPont: Wilmington, DE, Jun. 27, 2006.
[16] Therapeutic Resource (2006) *Product Information for Virkon*; Retrieved July 10, 2007 from http://www.therapeuticresource.ca/CVS/virkoninfopack.pdf
[17] Ibid

because beads can be expensive, it's not bad form to reuse a bead on the same person if you clean and sterilize it before reuse.

Before you insert a line into a needle, check it for any bends or knots. Kinks and knots make the line difficult to pass through the needle, so if you notice any in the middle of the line, set it aside and use a new line. You can get away with a kink in the last few inches of one side of the line so long as you don't pass it through the needle's lumen or the skin.

To insert the line, grasp the line in your hand leaving about 1½ - 2 inches free to thread. Thread into the lumen on the tip side of the needle being careful to avoid a needlestick. It may take a few attempts to get the line to fit in the hole, but be patient if it takes more. Once you have the line started, push it through the needle an inch or two at a time.

When the line passes out of the hub, you can grasp it with your fingers and continue to gently pull it through. Be sure to hold it on the point side so that it travels in a straight line through the lumen. This helps prevents the line from catching on the bevel. If the line catches, not only is a tug on the line more likely to pull out the needle before you're ready, but the movement in the skin increases the amount of pain for the bottom and the amount of blood you will have to clean up. Adjust the length of the line so that you have more than enough for whatever you have planned with it.

If you plan to thread more than one needle, consider threading as many as your design allows before you remove any. This has two benefits. First, it helps the bottom with pain processing. Second, it helps them psychologically because they tend to be more likely to want to press on and prove themselves once the line is in the needle.

When you're ready to remove a needle, grasp the exposed line on the point side and pull gently on the bevel. Don't let go of the line until you the needle passes completely clear of the line. Put the needle in your sharps container and clean any blood drops with an alcohol soaked cotton ball. Apply direct pressure to stop any bleeding as necessary, but don't worry about getting every last bit of blood yet because you'll have to clean the spot again very soon.

Fishing line is very sharp and will cut when it rubs or pulls against the flesh. Before you tie on any bead or move the line inside the skin in any way you need to lubricate it. Alcohol gel or Surgilube are good lubricants for this. Line lubricated with alcohol gel will burn when moved and is substantially more painful for the bottom than line lubricated with Surgilube. Some bottoms really enjoy this, some don't. Regardless of which lubricant you use, apply it liberally around the entry and exit points of the line and massage it into the skin wounds with your finger.

Because of the weight and gaps that using more than one bead creates when you are securing it to the skin, you will be happier with the results if you limit yourself to one bead per line and stick with lighter weight beads. Your mileage may vary, so do what makes you and your partner happy.

There are several ways to tie a bead to the skin. The simplest is to thread each end of the fishing line, pull it tight against the skin, and tie the ends together with a surgeon's knot behind the bead. It takes practice and luck to get a bead to lay flat against the skin when you tie them this way, so don't get discouraged if you don't get perfect results on your first attempt.

After you've secured the bead, clean away any blood or excess lubricant from the skin and the line. Larger more accessible spots can be cleaned with an alcohol soaked cotton ball. Use alcohol soaked cotton swabs (Q-tips®) to clean any blood from the line or piercing wounds.

You can also secure a bead using two needles and one length of line. To start, pierce the two lines parallel to each other with symmetrical entry and exit points. Thread the line through the top needle and remove the needle (see Figure 2: Getting Started with a Two Needle Bead). Next, thread each line through the center of the bead (see

Figure 3: Threading the Bead). Thread the line that exited the hub through the point of the bottom needle before removing it (see Figure 4: Threading the Second Needle). Finally, thread the line back through the bead (see Figure 5: Threading the Bead - Final Pass) and tie the loose line ends together with a surgeon's knot.

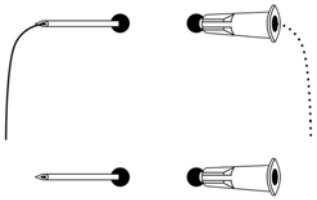

Figure 2: Getting Started with a Two Needle Bead

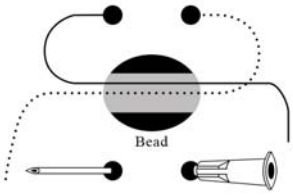

Figure 3: Threading the Bead – First Pass

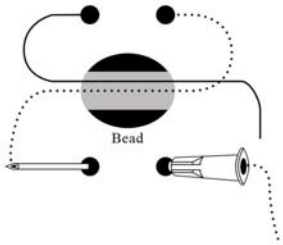

Figure 4: Threading the Second Needle

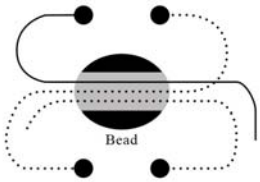

Figure 5: Threading the Bead - Final Pass

There are other ways to tie beads to the skin. A pendant can be secured to the skin by using a finishing lark's head knot[18]. Be mindful that the more you let a pendant hang, the more likely it is to get hooked on hair, clothing, etc. Similarly, you can hang a bead vertically. Tie a bead on the top to keep the line from pulling through and tie the bead with a cinch knot. You can also secure the top with a small lead fishing sinker[19].

I have only tried to make an internally threaded corset once and the result was so-so. If you want to try this remember that while standard corset needles are parallel with the ground, this arrangement won't work on an internally threaded corset. Visualize the angle the thread will take and insert the needle at an appropriate angle. The biggest difficulty I experienced was pulling the thread taut through all the various punctures and tying the knot tight. Body position and contortion made a big difference.

Whatever you do, experiment and have fun. If you find a technique that works well, share it with others – that's how we learn.

The line and fluid are contaminated with blood, so treat them accordingly. Avoid the temptation to touch them or let others touch them as that increases the risk of infection. Also, if other people touch the beads they will come in contact with your body fluids.

Bead Removal

[18]A good illustration of a finishing lark's head is available on page 140 of Jay Wiseman's Erotic Bondage Handbook.
[19]I have no idea how much risk of lead poisoning a fishing sinker poses. Proceed at your own risk and negotiate.

You can leave the line in the skin for at least 4-5 hours without many problems. If you plan to leave the line in for more than a few minutes, inspect it periodically. If you notice any swelling or other indications of a problem, remove the line immediately and monitor the wounds.

A suture removal kit is ideal for removing the beads when you're ready. The kits, which usually cost about one dollar, usually contain tweezers, scissors, and gauze pads all of which are sterile inside the packaging.

You will need to lubricate the line again before you pull it back through the skin. It's easier to do this after you cut the bead away. When you cut the line, make sure to cut away any knots and bends. While you want to leave enough line to grip with tweezers, cut the end that will be pulled through the skin as short as possible because the line is weakened and could break. Visualize the length of the line so that when you pull it free you will know whether there's any left inside.

Seek qualified medical attention if you notice any complications after a line insertion. Be honest about what you did because while the complications could be the result of a minor skin infection, the risk that a bit of line is still embedded in the skin is very real and requires appropriate treatment.

Play Piercing Supplies

While this list isn't comprehensive, it should give you a fair idea of everything you definitely need for play piercing.

Essentials

- Hypodermic needles in appropriate sizes
- Sharps container
- Antiseptic solution (alcohol, povidone-iodine, etc.)
- Cotton balls
- Latex or Nitrile Gloves
- Sterile gauze
- Trash bag
- Adhesive bandages (Band-Aids®)
- Bandage scissors
- Corks (regular or rubber)

Optional

- Tape
- Wire cutters
- Spray bottle
- Monofilament fishing line
- Surgical marking pen
- Surgilube
- Alcohol Gel (Purell)
- Sterile Drapes (aka chux)
- Thimbles