

Tattoos and Piercings

Despite the fact that generally tattoos and piercings are **NOT** recommended for someone who has an active eating disorder and is regularly running high blood glucose levels, we are aware that this may not deter someone who is adamant on having one. In light of this we have put together some guidelines for anyone that is planning on going ahead in such a situation. Please note that DWED are not health care practitioners and so cannot give direct medical advice.

- **Find a reputable parlour:** Research and ask around for other's experiences. Make sure the place you chose to go for your tattoo or piercing is fully license and up to date with safety certification.
- **Go by gut instinct:** If the atmosphere doesn't feel right, find somewhere else. It is important to feel comfortable and confident in your surroundings.
- **Be honest:** If the shop is running as it should do, then they will ask you for details of health conditions. Try to be as honest as you can if they require information about diabetic control because the case may be that you are just too high risk for the procedure you wish to have.
- **Start small:** It is far better to go for a small tattoo or routine piercing than to go for something more complex that puts you at increased risk for developing an infection. Bottom line is that the intricate inked sleeve you have your heart set on is not worth losing your arm over!
- **If you notice any problematic signs seek help immediately:** Ensure you clean well and keep a close eye on your tattoo or piercing in the period following the procedure. Weeping or swelling as well as redness and pain are all potential indicators for infection. If you recognise that the healing process is not going as it should be then see your GP or a nurse as soon as possible for treatment. You may require wound dressing or antibiotic treatment.
- **Attempt to keep your sugar levels as stable as you can throughout the process:** This is important before and after your procedure, and especially if you are prescribed any course of antibiotics. Try to use your tattoo or piercing as a motivator for not omitting insulin and for keeping tighter control if you possibly can. Keep the end goal in mind and remember that the healthier you are will result in quicker, cleaner healing.

Further useful information can be found via the following links:

<https://www.diabetes.org.uk/MyLife-YoungAdults/Living-my-life/Tattoos-and-body-piercing-/>

<https://diabetes.co.uk/tattoos-and-diabetes.html>

<http://blog.joslin.org/2015/02/the-safe-way-to-get-ink-when-you-have-diabetes/>