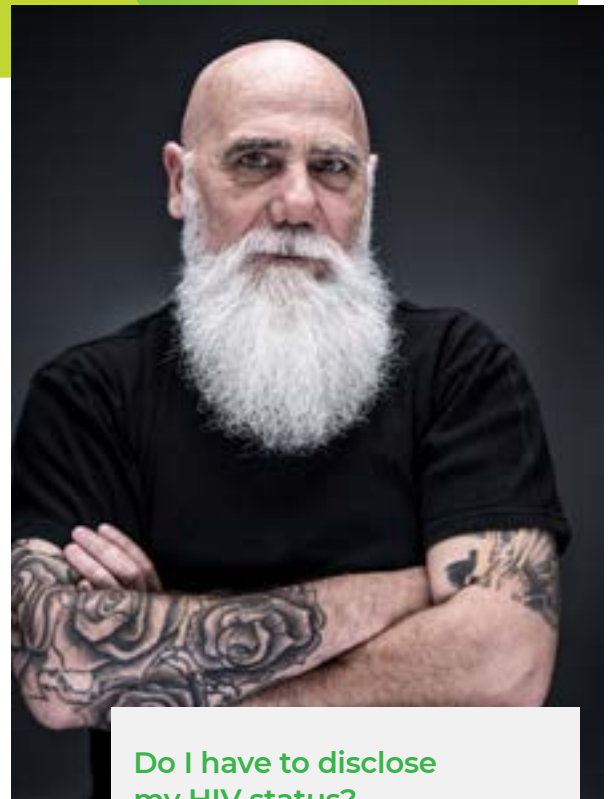


# HIV & Tattoos and Piercings

What you need to know when getting a tattoo or piercing in NSW

## The Facts

- Tattoos and piercings are a popular form of body art for adults including people living with HIV (PLHIV).
- HIV is not a barrier to receiving a tattoo, piercing, or cosmetic and beauty treatments.
- It is illegal to refuse to give PLHIV a tattoo or piercing because of your HIV status under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
- You have no legal responsibility to disclose your HIV status when getting a tattoo, piercing, or other body modification, even if an intake or waiver form has a question asking about your HIV status.
- Tattoo parlours in NSW are required to be registered under the *Tattoo Parlour Act 2012* and comply with both the *Public Health Act 2010* and the *Public Health Regulation 2012*, by using sterilised equipment, disposable gloves, disposable paper towels, disposable shavers, and single-use needles which are disposed in a sharps container.
- In Australia, all tattoo artists, piercers, dentists, cosmetic therapists, and other body art practitioners practice 'universal precautions' in performing their services such as piercings, tattoos, or other body modification treatments.
- Universal precautions mean they treat all clients universally, as if everyone was already living with HIV, hepatitis B (HBV) or hepatitis C (HCV), and other blood-borne viruses (BBVs).



### Do I have to disclose my HIV status?

In NSW, you do not have to disclose your HIV status when getting a piercing and/or tattoo.

If you choose to disclose your HIV status, you should be treated no differently to anyone else in the salon.

## Know your risks

- The most common complications from tattooing or piercings are skin infections or allergic reactions to jewellery or tattoo ink. There is also risk of damage to teeth from mouth piercings.
- If a tattoo or piercing procedure is not performed using universal precautions, there may be a risk of bacterial, fungal or other BBVs e.g. HBV and HCV.
- Avoid getting tattoos or piercings in countries outside Australia, where high standards of infection control practices or universal precautions might not be followed.
- Home tattooing or prison tattooing are not safe and can put you at higher risk of infections.
- Temporary tattoos can be latex-based and may cause allergies with a small risk of fatality.

## Universal precautions and what to look out for

### The parlour

- In NSW, all tattoo parlours are required by NSW Health to be registered under the *Tattoo Parlour Act 2012* and comply with *Public Health Regulation 2012*. You should be able to see a certificate of registration. If you can't see it in a public area, you are well within your rights to ask to see it.
- You should be required to sign a waiver form and provide your name, contact number, and address. This is in case of an incident regarding infection control, so they will be able to contact you.
- You are not required to include any details about your medications, HIV, or any other BBV status.

### Your artist

- Washes their hands thoroughly at the beginning, end, and whenever there is a break in the procedure.
- Maintains their work area in a clean and tidy fashion and cleans their work area between clients.
- Puts on new single-use gloves for every client. Gloves should only touch your skin, the needle and tattooing machine, or your jewellery, and should be changed during breaks such as when answering a phone.
- Cleans and disinfects your skin before the procedure and uses a disposable shaver that is immediately discarded after use.
- Uses sterile single-use needles and equipment opened from a sealed package in front of you. Needles should be discarded into a sharps container immediately after use.

- Transfers tattoo ink into new sterile ink pots for each client, and the ink pots are thrown out immediately after use.
- Should be able to answer any questions you have about universal precautions and infection prevention control guidelines. They should also know how to follow standard procedures if there is a needlestick injury.

## What if my form asks about my HIV status or medications I take?

Technically, tattoo parlours or other intake forms should never ask you about your HIV status or other BBVs.

Despite this, we know many tattoo and body piercing parlours continue to have this on their intake forms and ask about HIV status and/or ask for a list of medications you take.

Refusing to perform a tattoo, piercing, or other body modification procedure because of your HIV status is illegal under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

### Have you experienced discrimination?

If you are living with HIV and have experienced any issues or difficulties accessing a service from a tattoo artist or other body art practitioner, please contact Positive Life NSW on 02 9206 2177 or 1800 245 677 (freecall) or via email [contact@positivelife.org.au](mailto:contact@positivelife.org.au)



For more information phone 02 9206 2177 or 1800 245 677 (freecall) or visit [www.positivelife.org.au](http://www.positivelife.org.au)

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The voice of all people living with HIV

Positive Life NSW