

Tattoo Removal Techniques & Risks

Tattoo removal is an expensive and painstaking procedure and removing a tattoo without some form of scarring is not possible at this time. More often people resort to covering a tattoo they are unhappy with by having a new tattoo applied over the old one.

Dermabrasion, Scarification, or Salabrasion

These methods, sometimes used in combination, can be quite painful. They involve sanding the skin with a diamond fraise (sanding disc) or a wire brush, or using an acid or salt solution to remove the pigment and/or create a scar in place of the tattoo.

Excision

Popular with smaller tattoos, this involves surgical removal of the skin with a scalpel.

Laser Removal

Laser light is used to break up the tattoo pigment. Several treatments are usually necessary, and it may be only partially effective. It can also provoke an allergic reaction.

For more information on tattoo and body piercing visit:
www.milwaukee.gov/bodyart



Tom Barrett, Mayor
Bevan K. Baker,
Commissioner of Health
www.milwaukee.gov/health

A guide of things to consider
before getting a tattoo or
permanent makeup

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Health Risks of Tattoos

Infection

It is possible to transmit infectious diseases such as hepatitis or HIV/AIDS through tattooing equipment and needles.

Unregulated Artists

Tattoo facilities and artists are subject to state and local regulations and inspections. To prevent the risk of infection, always go to a licensed artist and facility. The City of Milwaukee Health Department does not license private homes as tattoo studios.

Granulomas

Firm, painful nodules may form around particles of pigment in some people.

Keloid formation

These are large, unsightly scars that can form after any tattoo, and especially after tattoo removal. Some people are more prone to them than others.

Allergic reactions

These are more common with temporary henna tattoo dye, but can occur even with permanent tattoo pigments, especially if improperly made. Allergic reactions to permanent tattoo ink are serious because the pigments are very difficult to remove.

MRI complications

Rarely, people with tattoos or permanent makeup get burning or swelling when they have a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) test, and the pigments can hamper the quality of an MRI image.

Choosing a Tattoo Artist

An established local tattoo artist estimates that 40% of his establishment's business involves covering or redoing other tattoo artists' work. The reason most often cited by unhappy customers is disappointment in how the tattoo turned out. Licensed tattoo practitioners and studios may vary widely in terms of quality, experience, and safety.



The following are some things to look for when deciding on a tattoo studio/artist:

- * Are facility and artist's licenses displayed?
- * Does the artist have a portfolio of previous work?
- * Has the artist received any awards for his or her work?
- * Is the studio clean? Are the work areas well lit?
- * Is the artist friendly and does he/she answer your questions respectfully?
- * Are the ingredients of the inks available upon request? This is especially important for persons with allergies.
- * Does the artist follow recommended sanitary procedures?
 1. The artist's hands are thoroughly washed with anti-bacterial soap and dried with single service towels immediately before and after each tattoo application.
 2. New gloves are worn during the procedure. Gloves are changed and hands washed if there is an interruption in the procedure.
 3. Only single service materials and equipment are used, including disposable razors and ink caps.
 4. Each needle and ink tube is individually packaged, dated and sealed, and set up and opened in front of the client.
 5. Only sterile, disposable or autoclaved needles and sterile autoclaved tube sets are used.
 6. An FDA approved autoclave for sterilizing is used, and the required autoclave records are available upon request.
 7. Work areas are cleaned and sanitized with EPA approved bacteriocidal and virucidal disinfectant before and after each client.
 8. Patron's skin is cleaned and antiseptic applied with cotton gauze or single-use toweling before procedure.
 9. Smoking and eating are not allowed in the procedure area.