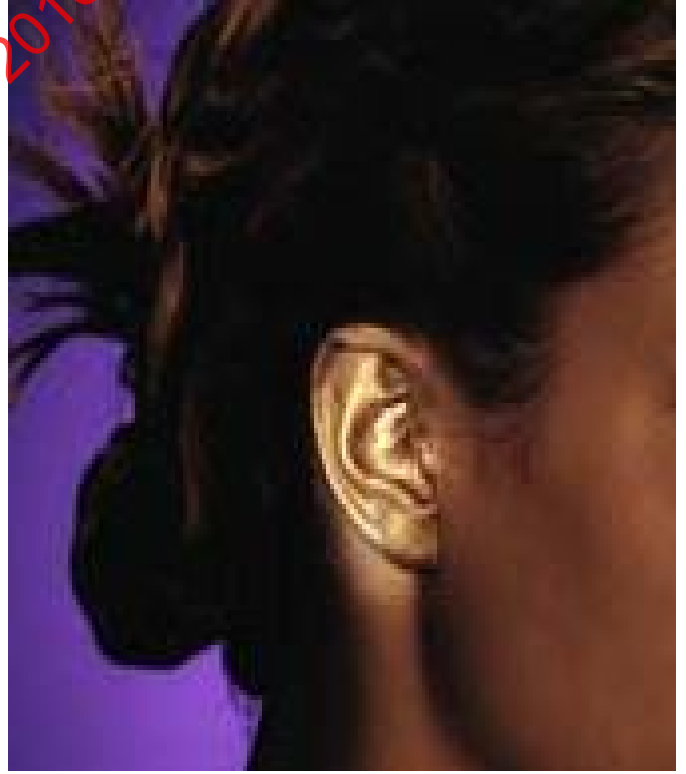


Piercing ears

NVQ level 2
beauty therapy
lecturer copy



Pierce ears Contents

1 Introduction to the ear piercing service

Introduction to the ear piercing service

An ear piercing treatment is a popular salon service and is particularly profitable due to the quick treatment time - usually 10-15 minutes. It also introduces a new range of clients to the salon, who may never have visited before, and therefore increases the likelihood of the client returning for further treatments.

Structure and function of the earlobe

The function of the external ear is to collect sound waves and direct them into the inner ear. The outer ear is called the pinna and is comprised of the helix and the lobule. You may have seen various parts of the ears pierced; however, beauty therapists can only pierce the lobule. The client should seek the services of a body piercer if any other part of the ear or body is to be pierced.



The helix is comprised of cartilage tissue that does not heal quickly and can often heal forming lumpy scar tissue. It is also often thicker than the lobule and therefore the studs are not large enough to pierce this area. The lobule is comprised of fibrous and fatty tissue with no cartilage; it has a plentiful blood supply and ear piercing is successfully carried out here.

2 Legislation

4 Industry codes of practice

8 Cost effectiveness

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12 Consultation and record keeping

15 Preparation

17 Equipment and materials

Equipment And Materials



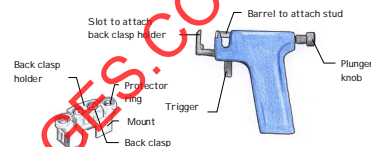
- Ear piercing gun
- Selection of stud earrings
- Ear piercing marker pen
- Pre-sealed alcohol tissues or ear piercing manufacturers wipes (x2)
- Surgical spirit - used to wipe over the ear piercing gun
- Cotton wool
- Disposable rubber gloves

Below is a list of the equipment and materials required to carry out a professional ear piercing treatment:

- Record card
- Consent form
- After care leaflet
- After care lotion
- Mirror
- Head band or clip
- Plastic bowl
- Pedal bin with liner
- Sharps box
- Hand mirror

Ear piercing gun

There are different manufacturers who produce ear piercing guns and stud earrings that are used with the gun. Below is an illustration of an authorised ear piercing gun, which complies with health and safety legislation:



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25 Aftercare advice

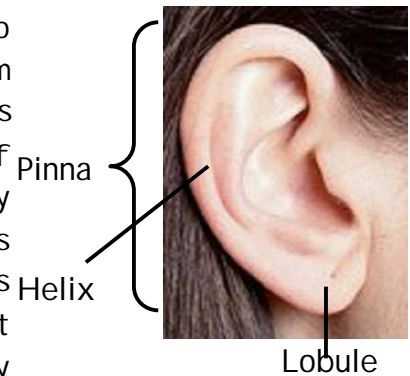
26 Body piercing

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Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This piece of legislation gives rights to both the employer and the employees.

Employers must provide:

- Access to a health and safety policy.
- Proper safety procedures e.g. fire exits and evacuation procedure.
- Safe equipment that is serviced regularly.
- Adequate training to all staff in safety procedures.
- A workplace that is both safe and meets health requirements.

Employees (you the therapist) must:

- Follow health and safety procedures that your employer provides you with.
- Act to protect yourself and others, such as clients and work colleagues.
- Treat all equipment properly and report any faults that you notice to your manager.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002

These regulations lay down the ways in which substances that can be deemed hazardous to health, should be used, stored and disposed of. All employees should be made aware of the risks of such substances and where necessary be given further training in how to handle the substances.

Detailed instructions must be kept regarding any products considered hazardous. As a therapist, you should know how to:

1. Store in the correct place.
2. Follow any precautions needed when using the substance.
3. Use the substance correctly.
4. Dispose of the substance correctly.

The Workplace (Health, safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992

This act covers things such as toilet facilities, minimum working temperature, adequate lighting, adequate ventilation, appropriate floor covering, drinking water and staff area.

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982

This act requires anybody offering a skin piercing treatment to be registered with the Local Health Authority. This registration is to include the **premises** where the treatment is to be performed and the **operator** who is to carry out the treatment.

A health inspector enforces this law and will check on the following points to ensure that the treatment is being performed in a healthy, safe and hygienic manner:

- Any equipment must be approved by the Environmental Health Authority
- Waste must be disposed of correctly
- The ear piercing gun must be sanitised before use
- Only studs from a pre-sealed blister pack can be used
- The ear must be sanitised before being pierced
- A clean ear piercing marker pen should be used to mark the ear
- Disposable gloves should be worn

If the inspector is satisfied, then a certificate of authorisation will be issued. This certificate should be displayed in the reception area. Any breach of the act or subsequent by-laws could result in a fine, or withdrawal of the certificate, which in effect would close down the piercing business.

Industry Codes Of Practice Sterilisation And Hygiene

Hygiene

Hygiene is very important to a therapist because correct hygiene:

- prevents infection (for both the therapist and client)
- prevents offensive odours
- gives a professional image to the client

As a therapist, no matter what we are doing, we must be aware that we have high standards to prevent cross infection and secondary infection occurring.

Cross infection occurs due to certain micro-organisms (germs such as fungus, virus or bacteria) being contagious then being transferred through direct or indirect contact.

Secondary infection occurs because germs enter a cut or broken skin. For example, if the client has a small graze and you use unhygienic practices, the graze could become infected.

Personal appearance of the therapist

As a therapist, you are required to present a professional image at all times. In order to do this you should:

- Have clean teeth and avoid eating strong smelling foods and smoking.
- Bathe daily.
- Ensure you have a clean, pressed uniform daily.
- Secure your hair away from the face.
- Have clean, short nails that are free from enamel, so that they do not interfere with the treatment.
- Cover any cuts on the hands with a waterproof plaster.
- Wear only minimal jewellery. Only a plain wedding band or stud earrings are allowed. (No facial piercing).
- Wear shoes that are clean, low heeled and fit securely around your feet.
- Wear tights to protect legs/feet and to prevent offensive odours.
- Not attend work/college if you have an infectious disease such as impetigo.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

Sterilisation and sanitisation

Sterilisation is the total destruction of all living micro-organisms and their spores.

Sanitisation is the destruction of some, but not all micro-organisms. It inhibits their growth.

Disinfect is to use a chemical that kills micro-organisms but not their spores. They keep the micro-organisms at an acceptable level.

Task

What are the hygienic practices that are followed when carrying out an ear piercing treatment?

- Only earrings from a pre-sealed blister pack are used. The packs often have an expiry date or a seal that changes colour once the expiry date has been reached.
- If any part of the earrings is dropped, a new packet is opened.
- Contra-indication checks are carried out prior to treatment.
- The area is sanitised before treatment.
- The therapist wears powder free gloves.
- Therapist's hands are washed prior to commencing treatment in warm water and sanitising detergent that contains chlorhexidine.
- Plastic forms from the sealed blister pack are fitted over the ear piercing gun to prevent cross infection.
- When marking the ears only a clean ear-piercing marker is used, a normal pen should not be used as it could cause blood poisoning.
- Never re-use earrings.
- If any bleeding occurs, all waste is disposed of into a lined bin, which is then placed into sharps box. This will then be collected and taken away to be incinerated (burnt).
- Towels are placed into a plastic bag lined container and are boil washed using detergent after each client.
- Headbands should either be disposable or boil washed after each client.
- The ear piercing gun is wiped over with suitable disinfectant prior to use.

Blood spill

If any bleeding occurs, this sometimes accidentally happens, it is vital that you understand the correct procedure to follow.

- Antiseptic should be applied to cotton wool and pressed onto the skin. This should be disposed into a sharps box or yellow bin liner.
- If there is a large blood spill, after applying gloves, neat bleach should be poured onto the object and left for 1 minute, then wash with lots of hot water and detergent.

Disposal of waste

All waste (rubbish) must be immediately placed into a bin, which has a lid and contains a bin liner. At the end of the day/session this should then be sealed and disposed of immediately into the main bin liner. Any waste that has met body fluids should be placed into a yellow bin liner if a large item, otherwise into a yellow 'sharps' container. This will then be collected and incinerated (burnt) at a suitable site.

Surfaces and floors

Clean surfaces and floors daily with hot water and detergent and then disinfect with surgical spirit or a similar product. In a training environment, the top of the trolley should be wiped over before use every time.

Task

Demonstrate your knowledge about hygiene and safety procedures by answering the following questions.

1. Why is hygiene important to a therapist?

- prevents infection (for both the therapist and client)
- prevents offensive odours
- gives a professional image to the client

2. What should you do if any bleeding occurs?

- Antiseptic should be applied to cotton wool and pressed onto the skin. This should be disposed into a sharps box or yellow bin liner.
- Separate disposable spatulas must be used.
- All waste should be placed in a sharps box.

3. What should you do to the surfaces of the trolley?

You should wipe over the trolley with surgical spirit.

4. What is the benefit of sanitising the skin prior to treatment?

Destroys or prevents the growth of micro-organisms.

5. Explain the difference between sterilisation, sanitisation and disinfection.

Sterilisation is the total destruction of all living micro-organisms and their spores.

Sanitisation is the destruction of some, but not all micro-organisms. It inhibits their growth.

Disinfect is to use a chemical that kills micro-organisms but not their spores. They keep the micro-organisms at an acceptable level.

6. Why is it important that the therapist wear personal protective equipment?

- To protect the therapist against the risk of coming into contact with any blood related diseases/disorders.
- To prevent against cross infection or secondary infection.
- To present a professional impression to the client.

Cost Effectiveness

Minimising waste

For a business to run cost effectively and make a profit, it is important that all wastage is minimal. To work cost effectively during a waxing treatment:

- Use the minimal amount of product to produce the desired outcome.
- Only use a minimal amount of waxing strips and spatulas.
- Split tissues, bedroll and cotton wool.
- Use the minimal amount of towels.
- Place tops back on products to work hygienically and prevent spillages.
- Always turn off taps and don't run the water excessively.
- Store products in the correct environment - usually dark, cool, dry and upright.
- Turn out lights when not in use.

Remember one of the most important things to be cost effective with is with your treatment time.

Timing of treatments

A calculation is made for how long each treatment should take to ensure that the price charged for each treatment is correct and profitable. It is important that you complete the service within the agreed time as:

- it prevents time wastage within the salon
- clients can calculate the time required for the treatment
- clients are not left waiting
- an effective appointment system is guaranteed

Pricing structure

It is crucial that you have a pricing structure clearly identified for all treatments on offer. This is to ensure cost effectiveness, consistency with each treatment and to prevent confusion when calculating clients' bills.

Task

Complete the price charged for ear piercing in your salon.

Contra-indications

What is a contra-indication?

It is something that prevents or restricts the way in which the treatment is carried out.

It is important that you can recognise a contra-indication so to prevent any further harm to the client or yourself, and to prevent cross-infection and secondary infection.

The contra-indications that **require medical referral** are:

- **Diabetes** - this medical condition causes the skin to heal very slowly. It is therefore a possibility that infection may occur.
- **Epilepsy** - there is a possibility that the stress of the treatment or the shock of the piercing of the skin may induced an epileptic fit.
- **Cardiovascular problems** - such as high or low blood pressure or heart problems, as the treatment may affect the problem. We are not trained doctors and so this risk should not be taken.
- **Dysfunction of the nervous system** - the client may not be able to feel any pain, may feel the pain intensified or may have an uncontrollable shake for example. The condition could therefore be uncomfortable or may result in inaccurate in the piercing.
- **Bacterial infection i.e. impetigo** - as the infection could spread.
- **Viral infection i.e. warts or herpes simplex** - as it would break the skin.
- **Fungal i.e. tinea** - as the infection could spread.

How to deal with a contra-indication

If the client has any of the above conditions, you must recommend that the client seek medical advice and treatment before proceeding with the treatment. It is important that you do not just send the client home, as they need to receive treatment from their doctor in order to prevent the condition from worsening and to alleviate the condition. If the client is already receiving treatment then a doctors note is required.

It is important that you do not diagnose any of these conditions as it is unprofessional and may worry or upset the client unnecessarily. If you suspect that the client has a contra-indication you should:

1. Inform the client that there is a possibility of a contra-indication and explain that you can not carry out the treatment as it may cause harm to the client.
2. If the client wishes for the treatment to be carried out they must bring to you a doctors note.
3. Reassure the client and offer an alternative treatment that is not contra-indicated.
4. Make a note on the record card.

The following contra-indications would prevent an ear piercing treatment from proceeding:

- **Inflammation, bruising or swelling on the ear** - it is important that you do not treat as it could worsen the condition and cause the client discomfort.
- **Recent scar tissue (last 6 months) on the ear** - If a client suffers from recent scar tissue it would appear as a red area of shiny skin and the treatment can not go ahead as it may cause the scar to re-open or heal badly.
- **Predisposition to keloid scarring** - this would appear as an area of raised, shiny scar tissue. You should not pierce the ears as the hole would produce unsightly scar tissue.
- **Blood related diseases such as HIV or Hepatitis B** - These diseases are highly contagious and can be passed on through blood and tissue fluid. Due to the risks involved if a client discloses that they have a blood related disease the treatment should not proceed. Cuts or abrasions on the ear
- **Allergic reaction** - If an allergic reaction is present, piercing the skin will be uncomfortable. If the client is prone to allergies, in particular nickel the treatment cannot go ahead as you do not want the client to develop an allergic reaction.
- **Small ear lobe** - a small ear lobe cannot be pierced as there is not enough tissue for the earring to be pierced through. This could mean that the earring would be hanging off the base of the lobe or is pierced through the hard tissue of the ear, which would be most uncomfortable.
- **Thick ear lobes** - if the ears are exceptionally large then the treatment should not proceed, as the earrings would not go all the way through the ear.
- **A very nervous client** - as the client may faint or jump as the treatment is being carried out.

Task

Answer the following questions to demonstrate your knowledge of the contra-indications to ear piercing:

1. List the contra-indications that require medical referral before treatment can proceed.

- Diabetes
- Epilepsy Cardiovascular problems
- Dysfunction of the nervous system
- Bacterial infection i.e. impetigo
- Viral infection i.e. warts or herpes simplex
- Fungal i.e. tinea

2. Why would you require a doctor's note before proceeding with a piercing service on a client with epilepsy?

There is a possibility that the stress of the treatment or the shock of the piercing of the skin may induced an epileptic fit.

3. Why is it important that you do not diagnose any contra-indications?

It is important that you do not diagnose any of these conditions as it is unprofessional and may worry or upset the client unnecessarily.

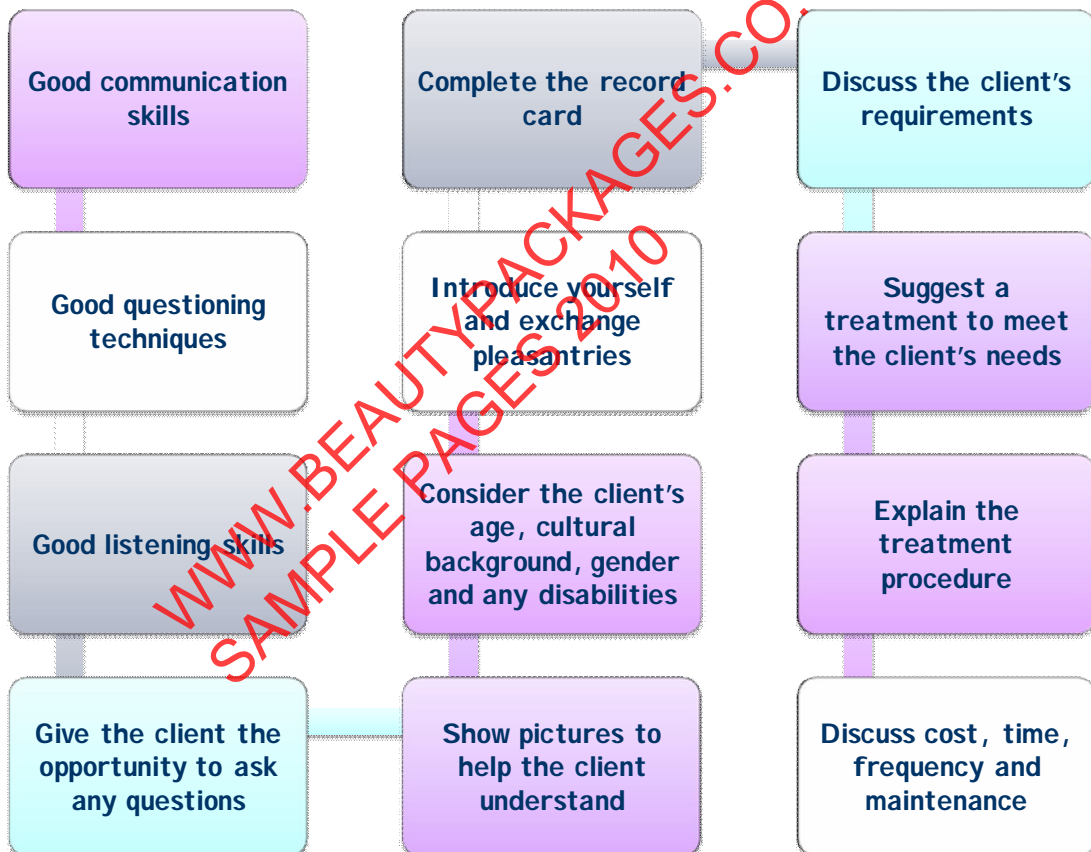
4. List the contra-indications that prevent an ear piercing service from being carried out.

- Inflammation, bruising or swelling on the ear
- Recent scar tissue (last 6 months) on the ear
- Predisposition to keloid scarring
- Blood related diseases such as HIV or Hepatitis B
- Allergic reaction
- Small ear lobe
- Thick ear lobes
- A very nervous client

Consultation

The first part of the consultation is greeting the client and making them feel comfortable. It is important that you welcome the client, preferably greet them by their name and introduce yourself by name before beginning the consultation.

One of the most important parts of the treatment is the consultation. At this point, you will discuss the client's needs and decide what treatment to carry out to meet those needs. In order for the client to be satisfied with the treatment you need to know what is expected. In order to do this you must therefore have the following:



Explain the treatment procedure.

- Discuss cost and timing of treatment.
- Allow the client time to ask questions.
- You would have to explain aftercare/homecare advice. This is to ensure that the client understands the commitment etc. required.

Record keeping

A record card should be completed for all treatments and contains confidential personal information about each client that is specific to each treatment. They should be stored in alphabetical order by surname in a locked metal filing cabinet or box. This should be easily accessible to the therapist, when ready to perform a treatment. This information could also be updated onto a computer system but you must be aware of your responsibilities under the Data Protection Act.

The record card should contain the following information:

- Client's name
- Address
- Date of birth
- Telephone number
- Doctors name and telephone number
- Any medical details
- List to check for contra-indications
- Services, specific products used and retail sales
- Client's signature or parent/guardian signature if the client is a minor

The record card is completed for the following reasons.

- In case you need to contact the client's GP.
- If you need to check up on a particular detail of the treatment.
- To act as a record that due care and attention was made when carrying out the treatment - i.e. to prove that the client has agreed to the treatment plan and agrees that all of the provided information is correct.

Consent/disclaimer forms

A parent or guardian must complete a consent form before a treatment can be carried out on a person less than 16 years of age. It should also be completed by a person to state:

- The client is over 16 years of age.
- The client has none of the contra-indications to the treatment.
- The procedure has been explained to them.
- Aftercare advice has been given.

This form is then attached to the client's record card. An example of a format for a disclaimer form is as follows:

I the undersigned acknowledge that my ears can be pierced by _____ using sterile earrings and that all necessary precautions are being carried out to ensure a hygienic treatment. I have no contra-indications to the treatment. The procedure and aftercare advice has been explained to me and the proprietor can not accept any responsibility for any negligence on my part in following the aftercare advice

Signed (parent or guardian if under 16 yrs)

Date.....

Data Protection Act 1998

This legislation is in place to protect client's privacy and confidentiality. You will be required to keep records of your clients' treatments; these could be either computer or paper based. Inform the client that their records will be stored and will only be accessed by those authorised to do so. The information should be: adequate, relevant and not excessive for the purpose, accurate, kept for no longer than is necessary and kept secure.

Preparation

It is important that before beginning any treatment you are fully prepared. This is vital to:

- Provide a good impression to the client.
- Prevent time wastage; therefore the treatment will be cost effective.
- Ensure that the treatment runs smoothly preventing you running behind for subsequent treatments.

Client preparation

Due to the nature of the treatment, the client will need to be prepared for the treatment both emotionally and physically. You should prepare the client for the treatment by:

1. Explaining the treatment procedure to the client and reinforcing the fact that strict levels of hygiene are being followed and that no needles are being used. Some clients will want you to explain the procedure in detail whereas others would like the treatment carried out as quickly as possible.
2. Demonstrating the noise that the gun will make.
3. Making the client aware that when the ear is being pierced no sensation will be felt until a few seconds after the piercing, and then an uncomfortable throb will be felt.
4. Asking the client to remove glasses or jewellery in the area.
5. Recommending the removal of warm clothing as the client will generally get very hot.
6. Securing the client's hair away from the face.
7. Draping a towel around the client's chest (precaution to catch any earring that may fall).
8. Sanitising the ears with a pre-packed alcohol wipe.

Note

If the client has thick earlobes explain that the earrings will feel tight and can be loosened off one notch. If the ears are exceptionally large then the treatment should not proceed, as the earrings would not go all the way through the ear.

Client positioning

When carrying out a treatment it is important that both you and the client are positioned correctly to:

- Ensure maximum comfort
- Prevent strain and injury
- Ensure that an effective treatment is carried out

For an ear piercing treatment, the client should:

- Be sat in an upright position - on either a beauty couch or a high chair
- Sit in a straight position
- Not cross their legs
- Look straight ahead.

The therapist should be able to pierce the client's ears easily without having to stretch or stoop low. Due to the accuracy of this treatment, the client should also be sat in good lighting.

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Equipment And Materials



- Ear piercing gun
- Selection of stud earrings
- Ear piercing marker pen
- Pre-sealed alcohol tissues or ear piercing manufacturers wipes (x2)
- Surgical spirit - used to wipe over the ear piercing gun
- Cotton wool
- Disposable rubber gloves
- Additional lighting
- Record card
- Consent form
- Aftercare leaflet
- Aftercare lotion
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