

# Hepatitis Basics

Keeping  
Your Liver  
Healthy



## HBV and Tattoos

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**T**here are not a lot of studies on the risk of becoming infected with hepatitis B from getting a tattoo, but this could happen if someone receives a tattoo in a place that doesn't follow safety practices.

The risk of getting hepatitis B from a tattoo you received on the streets, in prisons or any place where they are not paying attention to safety greatly increases the risk of getting hepatitis B and other diseases.

Most states have laws about making sure that there are safety rules being followed in tattoo shops. But most of the time there are no people that go in and inspect the tattoo shops to make sure that they are following safety rules. That is why it is so important that the tattoo customer make sure that those rules are being followed carefully – we can all do our part by asking questions about safety. You can even ask to watch while the tattoo artist is giving a tattoo to someone else. Another good way to keep it safe is

by asking friends who have received 'safe' tattoos where they got them and ask their opinion of the tattoo artist.

Most tattoo shops and their owners are very concerned about safety and want to make sure that their customers are protected from getting any type of infection. They are more than willing to talk about what they are doing to keep their customers safe and disease free.

If you are considering getting a tattoo we recommend that people only have a tattoo done in a commercial shop with professional tattoo artists. Make sure the following practices are followed very closely:

- The artist uses only new needles and separate pots that hold the ink for each customer. No re-use between customers
- The equipment doesn't come into contact with other people's blood or body fluids that could spread an infection

- The equipment that may come into contact with blood is sterilized with the use of an autoclave – a machine that uses heat and pressure to sterilize
- The tattoo artist uses new safety gloves
- All work areas are clean and disinfected
- The fresh tattoo is covered with a dressing to prevent infection or disease transmission
- All materials that come into contact with blood are disposed of safely
- The tattoo artist should tell you how to care for the new tattoo to make sure that it doesn't get infected

Keep an eye on the tattoo – if you notice any sign of infection get in to see a doctor as soon as possible.

*For more information check out:*  
<http://www.hepatitistattoos.org/>

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The information in this fact sheet is designed to help you understand and manage HBV and is not intended as medical advice. All persons with HBV should consult a medical practitioner for diagnosis and treatment of HBV.

For more information about the hepatitis B, visit the following websites.  
**Hepatitis B Foundation: [www.hepb.org](http://www.hepb.org) • [HIVandHepatitis.com](http://HIVandHepatitis.com)**

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