

**TATTOOS AND YOU**  
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**Tattoos are becoming a rite of passage for many teens when they turn 18. If you think your teen is considering getting a tattoo, or if you or someone you know is considering getting a tattoo, this article is for you.**

**What are the Indiana laws concerning tattoos?**

- 1. Anyone less than 18 years of age must be accompanied by, and have written permission from, a parent or legal guardian. Tattoo artists may choose not to tattoo a person under the age of 18, even if they have parental consent.**
- 2. Tattoo artists must receive annual training concerning bloodborne pathogens.**
- 3. Tattoo artists are not required to have received training on the tattooing process, and are not required to be registered or licensed.**
- 4. Tattoo parlors are not routinely inspected by the state. Investigations are done based upon complaints. There are some counties that require routine inspections based on local ordinances.**

**What infection risks are involved with tattooing?**

- 1. Infection risk is small, if the tattoo artist follows state law. However, you do have to wait one year before donating blood, due to this risk.**
- 2. Blood poisoning, staphylococcal infection and skin disease.**
- 3. Diseases, such as Hepatitis B and C can occur if unsterile equipment is used for tattooing.**

**What are signs of infection I need to report to my health care professional, after a tattoo? Thick yellow or green drainage from the tattoo, continued oozing or bleeding, red streaks or hot sensation moving away from the tattoo, pain that continues or gets worse and unusual pain or swelling.**

**If you get a tattoo tell your doctor and x-ray technician about your tattoo, as some show up on x-ray and MRI complications can occur.**

**Could I be allergic to a tattoo?**

**In very rare instances, persons have been allergic to the dye. The newer pigments do not contain mercury, chromium, cadmium and cobalt, which were the main source of allergies. However, if someone is allergic to the dye, it is particularly troublesome because the pigments are hard to remove. People can develop an allergic reaction to tattoos they have had for years. Sunlight may irritate a tattoo. Always wear sunscreen after your tattoo heals.**

**What are other health issues I should consider prior to getting a tattoo?**

- 1. Never cover a mole with a tattoo, it could turn cancerous without your knowing it.**
- 2. If you develop keloids, large, bumpy scars, these could occur in your tattoo.**

- 3. Granulomas may form around tattoo pigments.**
- 3. If you are pregnant, diabetic, or have other health conditions talk to your health care professional and tattoo artist before getting a tattoo.**
- 4. Alcohol and/or certain drugs could cause you to bleed more than normal. If you have been drinking or using drugs, you should not get a tattoo.**
- 5. Alcohol and/or certain drugs also may cause you to have poor judgement. If you are under the influence of drugs or alcohol you should wait to get your tattoo.**

**The most common problem with tattoos is dissatisfaction. Remember that tattoo removal is always painful and expensive, yet not always effective! If you are not sure that you want this permanent addition to your skin, wait and think it through.**

**What should I look for to help ensure a safe tattooing experience?**

- 1. Patron/Client rights should be on display.**
- 2. Gloves must be worn when the artist is tattooing.**
- 3. There should be hand-washing facilities with running water readily available for the tattoo artists use.**
- 4. Needles and tubes must be sterile. A new container of ink is to be used for each patron and needles must be sterile and used only on you.**
- 5. Appropriate disinfectants should be used to clean surfaces where there has been, or might have been blood.**
- 6. If you feel the tattoo artist has been drinking or using drugs, you should wait or seek another tattoo artist.**

**One tattoo studio's website stated, "If you ask questions about safety procedures and they are not answered to your satisfaction you should leave."**

**Research for this article was obtained from the FDA at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) and the ISDH at [www.in.gov/isdh](http://www.in.gov/isdh).**