

# TATTOO

## FACT SHEETS



### BARGAIN TATTOOS

*A woman suffered in agony and was told she may lose her foot after getting a bargain tattoo. One thing is for sure, she won't be doing that again!*



It didn't take long for her foot to get infected after getting the bargain tattoo. Just hours later her foot became swollen and infected. It was very painful and she had a hard time walking.

She took herself to the hospital. The doctors spent the next month trying to save her foot. The hospital was even debating whether to amputate her foot after three different antibiotic courses didn't stop the infection. Luckily, they were able to clear up the infection and save her foot.

There are many things you can do to prevent your tattoo from becoming infected. See fact sheets #1 and #2 for general information about tattoo safety and aftercare.

### Infections

The skin is the barrier that prevents organisms from entering our bodies. Since getting a tattoo requires that a needle is used to puncture the skin to insert the ink there is a real possibility that getting a tattoo could lead to a skin infection. The infections range from mild to moderate, and, for some, severe. But the infections can be prevented by following standard safety precautions. The most important prevention message is this: Only go to tattoo parlors that practice safety—that implement blood-borne pathogen protections. In addition there are many things you can do prevent your tattoo from becoming infected.

**Tattoo ink** — although uncommon, some ink may be contaminated with bacteria, viruses and other organisms that could cause infections, allergic reactions, rashes, bumps on the skin (granulomas) and scarring. Talk with your tattoo artist about their tattoo ink. Make sure that only one ink pot is used for each person.

**After care** — consider a new tattoo as an open wound—keep the area away from potential sources of infection. Most importantly keep the tattoo clean.

**!** If you notice pain, infection, swelling, more redness than you would expect from getting a tattoo—red streaks, extreme tenderness in and around the area of the tattoo or a high fever—see your medical provider as soon as possible.

Although rare, if you notice hives, difficulty breathing, and/or swelling of the tongue—it could be a medical emergency and needs immediate medical attention.

