

**Allegany County Department of Health  
Division of Environmental Health**

**Tattoo Aftercare Instructions**

- Keep tattoo covered for at least one hour, and no longer than eight hours.
- After removing bandage, wash tattoo and surrounding area with water and mild soap.
- If bandage sticks to your tattoo, soak it in cool water until it falls off.
- Rinse away all surface blood, plasma, ointment, and remaining soap.
- Always blot dry (i.e., do not rub) until tattoo is completely healed.
- Do not re-bandage the tattoo.
- Do not apply petroleum jelly.
- Do not apply alcohol, peroxide, or betadine.
- Do not rub, pick, or scratch your tattoo.
- Pat tattoo dry with a clean towel and apply a very thin layer of antibiotic ointment. Do this 3 to 4 times daily.
- Rub the antibiotic ointment in until it is dry.
- If ointment looks wet or greasy, pat dry with a paper towel.
- After 3 days, switch to a high-quality fragrance-free hand lotion. Do not overuse ointment. Keep skin moist, not wet.
- If a rash occurs or tattoo stays very sensitive, discontinue lotion, let tattoo dry out, and wash with an antibacterial soap and water 3 times per day.
- Do not expose to direct sunlight for two weeks.
- Do not swim in pools, lakes, rivers, etc. for ten days.
- Do not soak in tub or sauna for ten days.

In the event of an infection or illness associated with the tattoo, consult with your physician and please notify the Allegany County Department of Health at 716-268-9250.