



# An Informational (NOT instructional) Guide To Needle Play/Play Piercing

Updated: January 11th, 2024

## **Safety and Risk**

Blood Borne Pathogens:

Bloodborne pathogens are infectious microorganisms in human blood that can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B (HBV), hepatitis C (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV). Needlesticks and other sharps-related injuries may expose individuals to bloodborne pathogens.

Prior to participating (topping or bottom) it is best practice to complete a BBP Training. There is access to many online, I recommend one specific to body piercers such as the one below.

<https://blxtraining.com/courses/tattoo-piercing-bbp/>

What does this mean?

When partaking in needle and sharps play, we subscribe to a set of standard precautions to prioritize safety for all: the top, the bottom, the space (and the people existing in said space), and our partners/families/other individuals we come in contact with over the span of our lifetime.



**Blood can transmit disease and as a universal default, we treat all blood as if it contains pathogens.**

Other safety items to consider:

- ★ How will you and/or your bottom respond (see “Negotiation Suggestions”)
- ★ Possibility of nerve damage
- ★ Scarring, bruising, semi-permanent marking
- ★ Unexpected Needle Sticks and cross contamination
- ★ Blood and blood splatter
- ★ Infection and injury
- ★ Fainting, panic and/or anxiety attacks, nausea

## Preparation and Supplies

“Medical/Clean” vs “Surgical/Sterile” - Clean technique is a practice that kills some microorganisms to prevent them from spreading. Sterile technique is a practice that completely kills and eliminates microorganisms. In play, we use **Clean Technique.**

What does this mean?

We use sterilized and/or single use supplies when possible. Items are considered sterile when they are placed in their original packaging (needles, band aids, gauze, alcohol wipes, etc.) Items that are NOT considered sterile include: sharps container, gloves, paper towels, and living human skin.



**It is imperative that you minimize contact with sterilized supplies before they reach the bottom. You can do this by:**

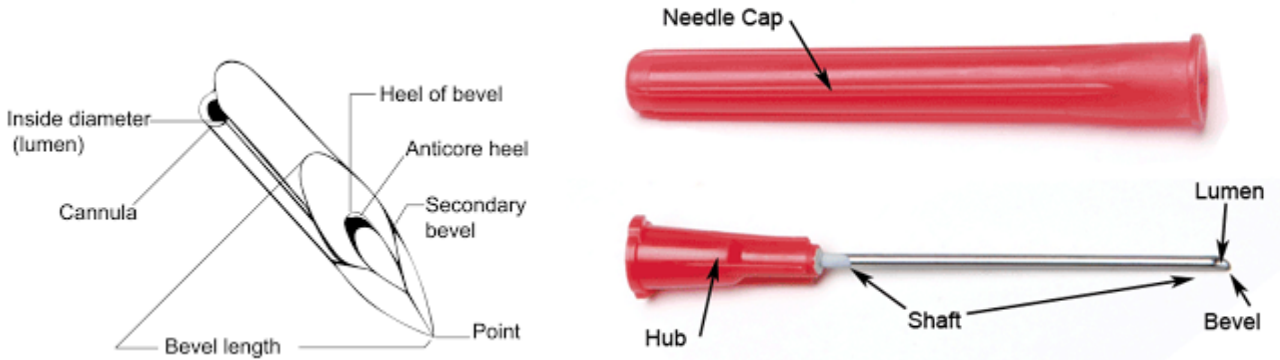
- ★ Changing gloves frequently
- ★ Creating a clean and dedicated workspace (See “Workspace”)
- ★ Keeping individually packaged supplies in their sealed packaging until just before they are needed.
- ★ Setting out an anticipated number of supplies and assuming what remains is blood bound to the bottom
- ★ Being mindful of what you are touching and thinking ahead to what we plan to touch next

Supply Check-List:

- Nitrile Gloves (preferably clear or white so as to see if blood is present)
- Surface Disinfectant (Caviwipes)
- Antiseptic Skin Cleanser (Chlorhexidine Gluconate)
- Hydrogen Peroxide
- Sharps container
- Sterile Needles
- Gauze and/or paper towel
- Alcohol Pads
- Drop Cloth (chux, disposable tablecloth, puppy pads)
- First Aid Kit

**Hypodermic Needle:** A hollow point that penetrates skin for the purpose of delivery to or withdrawal of fluids from the body.

\*You can utilize different types of needles for this type of play (acupuncture needles, traditional piercing needles, dental needles, etc.), though this guide will focus on the use of hypodermic needles.



### Need to know aspects to the hypodermic needle

**Gauge** - This is the diameter of the needle / how thick the needle is. A suggested starting Range is typically 25g-22g. It is important to note that the smaller the number, the larger/thicker the needle will be.



**Length** - This is how long the shaft of the needle is. Commonly available lengths are 5/16 in, 1/2 in, 1.0 in, 1.5 in, and 2in. A suggested starting range is typically 1.0-2.0”.

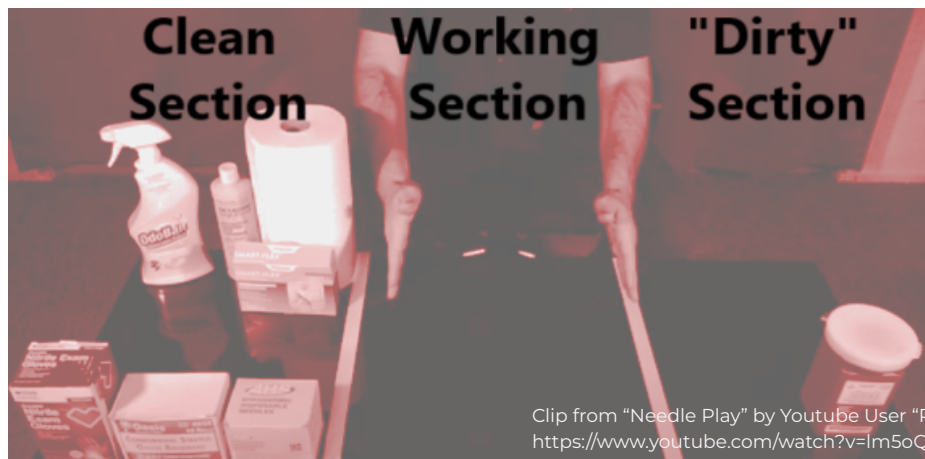
## **Clean Dedicated Workspace**

It is important to maintain a clean workspace. The easiest way to do this is to create a space with the following sections: "Clean Section", "Working Section", and "Dirty Section". Having dedicated sections is best practice for minimizing the risk of crossover and contamination.

Clean Section: Sanitation and disinfectant supplies, unopened needles, fresh gauze, paper towels, first aid, gloves, wipes, bandages, etc.

Working Section: Human/Object being pierced, needles to be used for that session

Dirty Section: Sharps Container, Bio Waste Bags, Trash Bin, etc.



A good rule of thumb is to only work from Left (clean) to right (dirty) and to absolutely refrain from moving right to left. You can move items from the clean section, then to the working section and from the working section to the dirty section though you cannot do that in the reverse (items in the working section cannot be moved to the clean section). In the case one must move from the working section or dirty section to the clean section, the existing gloves being worn will need to be disposed of in the dirty section (or object will need to be sanitized) prior to touching items in the clean or working section.

### **You will need to change into fresh gloves when:**

1. Touched the active play site (working section) and need to go back to get supplies (clean section)
2. Touched the active play site (working section) and want to grab your phone to take a picture

3. Touched the sharps container (dirty section) and are going back to the active play site (working section)

***\*If you are unsure, just change your gloves. There is no amount of time that this would be unhelpful.\****

## **Suggested Negotiation Topics**

- ★ Review both medical and personal health information (including but not limited to the existence of blood borne pathogens, use of blood thinner medication, existence of clotting disorders, and existing injuries or skin infections to desired play area).
- ★ Prior experience with needles and/or sharp play.
- ★ Reactions to the sight of blood (does either person have a history of fainting or lightheadedness)
- ★ Goals and desires for the scene (desired design, mood, sensory experience, pain level)
- ★ Comfortability with temporary marking or permanent scarring.
- ★ Placement of needles, sizing of needles, amount of needles
- ★ Desired aftercare for both top and bottom

## **In Practice**

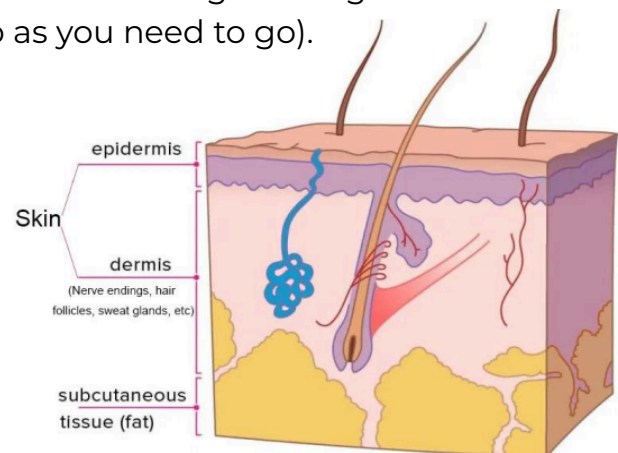
Play piercing (and needle play) is only facilitated on the skin's surface. A needle will go through the outermost layers of skin (epidermis and dermis) and into the subcutaneous fat layer, **NOT** into muscle or anything deeper. Skin thickness varies from person to person and from body part to body part (average skin thickness is less than 2mm). Needles will go through the skin but will remain shallow (3-6mm is as deep as you need to go).

Where on the body?

Usual play areas include back, butt, chest, thighs, etc.. Avoid visible veins, joints, and areas with a history of injuries. It is also best practice to ask prior to piercing through tattoos.

Removal & Clean up:

Basic first aid and the additional cleaning



up of the play space. Make sure to clean up blood with gauze/paper towel followed by peroxide. Bandage when needed and assure no blood will be transferred throughout the next few minutes. Once the bottom is no longer in the play space, assure your workspace sections are in order and that the working space surface is disinfected and sanitized.

## **Aftercare**