



BEAUTY DISSECTED

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Ensuring safety measures while piercing the body

It has been in fashion for a long time, and body piercing in Bangladesh is now more popular than ever. While in the past we were accustomed seeing people with earrings and nose-pins, youngsters now also flaunt their pierced eyebrows, lips, and tongues. Pierced nipples and genitalia are also not unheard of.

As physicians we are concerned with the safety of these procedures. The aforementioned body parts are quite sensitive and to avoid chances of an infection the piercings must be done under trained individuals taking proper safety precautions.

Before doing the piercing, it should be made certain that the individuals is not suffering from diseases like diabetes, skin rashes, any kind of lump in the area considered, blood disorders, hypertension or a low immunity, or a skin type that may be prone to keloid formation. Having these conditions may interfere with the healing process.

The most serious risks are possible infections, allergic reactions, prolonged bleeding, damage to nerves, or damage to the surrounding area like teeth, in case of oral piercings. Infections may be caused by bacteria, hepatitis virus, tetanus, and yeast. The pierced skin may come in contact with these organisms during or after the piercing.

First, you have to choose an experienced professional. When you get there, make sure the room is clean, the instruments sterile, and the person doing the piercing is wearing gloves. Ensure that you have taken the medication necessary prior to the piercing and local anaesthesia is used if necessary.

Proper jewellery must also be selected. While piercing the naval, non-allergic metal like 14 karat (or above) gold, or a nickel-free alloy should be chosen. Make sure the jewellery is sterilised before being introduced. The area should then be cleaned and an ointment applied afterwards.

It must be considered that the different parts of the body heal at different rates and at times, the whole process may take even up to a year. If there is too much pain, swelling, or pus formation in the pierced area a physician should be consulted immediately.

NEWS FLASH

Lure of tattoos and piercings

Body art has now become a fascinating form of self-expression, and piercings and tattoos tend to do just that. You could opt for a cute stud on your tragus or even go for something much bolder such as piercing your eyebrow.

Even with tattoos, there's always the option of going minimalistic or vibrant. And if you are not sure if this is right for you, you could always use a clip-on jewellery or opt for temporary tattoos. But before you venture into the world of this unique art-form, there are always a few pointers to keep track of so that you do not find yourself lost among the various options available.

PIERCINGS

The tradition of ear piercings and nose pins has been etched into the Bengali heritage for centuries. Over time, variations have increased to include bolder more unconventional spots such as the eyebrows, lips and the naval.

Whether you are into the traditional vibe or tend to experiment a bit more, there are a few factors to take into consideration before you do decide to get a piercing.

Not all piercings suit all body types neither do they heal at the same rate. While the classic earlobe piercing may only take four to six weeks to heal, helix piercings and naval piercings can take up to six months. It is quite important to keep the region clean during that time to avoid getting an infection.

"No matter where you pierce, make sure you use proper jewellery that is not too tight. For example, it is not exactly wise to use earrings for your eyebrows. Since there's always a chance of infection with piercings, get it done at a proper place which has the right surgical equipment and uses sterile instruments to do the piercing. That way, you will save yourself the hassle of redoing it," Dr Firdaus Quader Minu, an ENT and cosmetic surgeon explained.

She also emphasised on the need to pick the right metal, explaining that since some people may be allergic to certain metals, it is always best to start with pure gold jewellery. You could also get other non-toxic metals from abroad, and then switch to imitation later when the piercing has completely healed.

THE CLASSY

If you are into studs, the tragus is the perfect spot on the ear for one. Since the area appears as a flat surface to those right in front of you, the designs will not be distorted by perspective. Even the little nook right above your earlobe is a popular piercing location, especially ideal for rings. Opt for large hoops to give the illusion that the piercing is bigger than it actually is. If subtlety is key, try getting your conch pierced. Being the second deeper part of the ear, small piercings such as thin hoops would fit snugly over there.

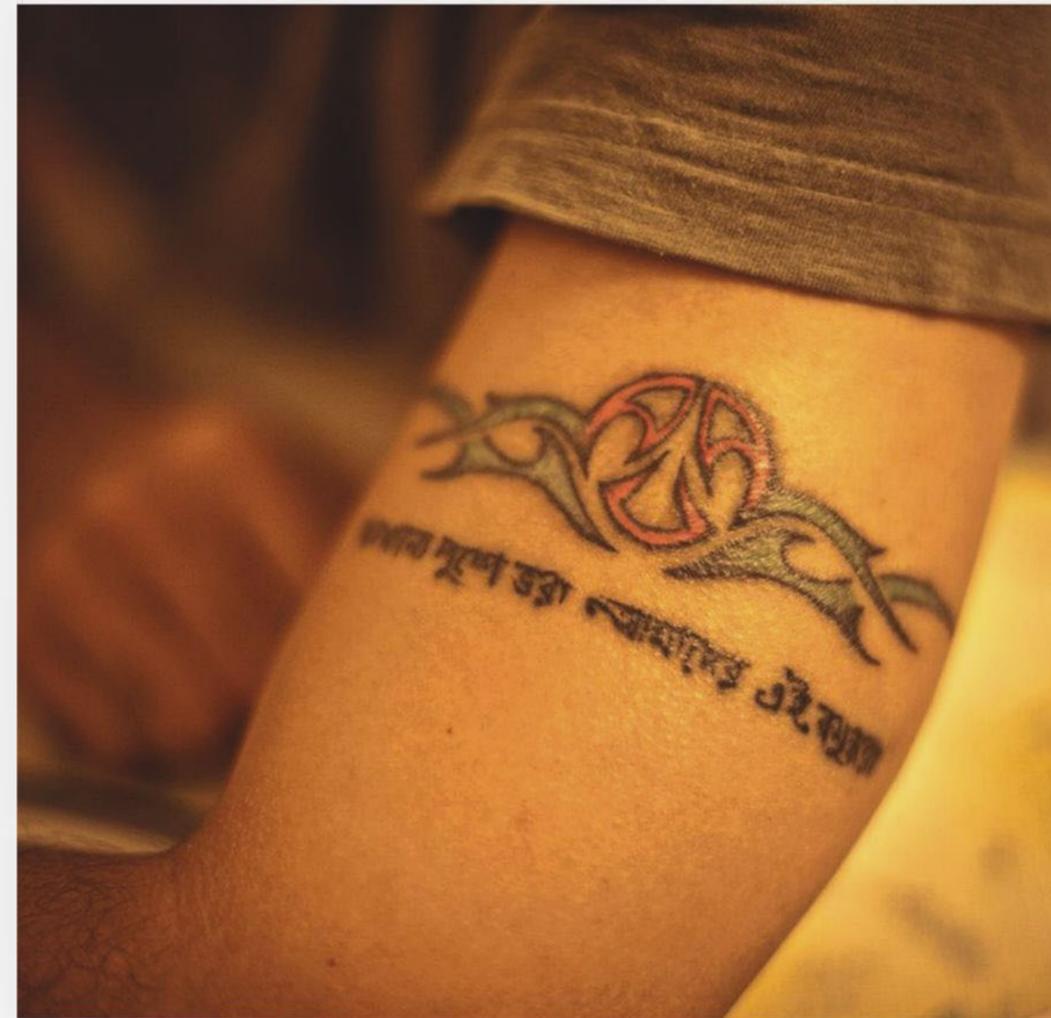
THE BOLD

Top ear piercings are perfect for those who are looking for a bit of flexibility and enjoy a bold look. Studs, rings, and loops — everything looks good over here! Since multiple piercings are possible in the helix,

you could always mix and match your earrings. If you do want to draw attention to your face, one bold way to do it is to get a septum piercing. Though it would take about three weeks for the pain to diminish, the complete healing process would take about six months. So, do keep in mind that there is a bit of time factor involved with this.

THE UNCONVENTIONAL

Though still quite unconventional in the country, one way to highlight your facial features is to get an eyebrow or a lip piercing. While studs go well for both spots, bars are more suited to the eyebrows and rings look better on the lip area. In fact, a lot of people also opt for the naval piercing, where you can put rings or studs.



While they take about five months to heal, they are rarely rejected by the body despite being a surface tattoo, and thus are less prone to infection.

TATTOOS

While still relatively new in Dhaka, people are also opting to tattoo art to find unique ways to express themselves. From minimalistic arrows, stars and diamonds, to images that extend to the whole arm, the tattoo scene in Bangladesh is more vibrant than you think.

First, research about the tattoo parlour or the tattoo artist you have in mind if you want to get a tattoo. Ask around, check their previous works and customer reviews to get a brief idea on what to expect.

Different tattoo artists specialise in different designs. So, pick your artist according to your design. Also, since the tattoo is probably going to be there for the rest of your life, think it through and do not get a tattoo on impulse. Start by telling your artist if you have any medical conditions, and while getting the tattoo if

you start feeling sick or dizzy, tell your artist immediately.

A few places to start looking for your perfect design could be Pinterest or inkedmag.com. Many artists here would happily copy designs that you have picked from Pinterest exactly the way you want it.

From calligraphy to tribal designs, there are plenty for you to choose from. You could opt for the rare kinds such as surreal imagery tattoos that use streaks of colours to create abstract models, or the bold traditional Japanese tattoo designs.

What is more common here is the black and grey tattoos, which is based on shading with a mixture of black and white ink. Other than that, portraits and even realism, which is tattooing pictures using a

photo are quite popular on the tattoo scene of Bangladesh.

WHERE TO GET THEM

For tattoos, Dhaka Tattoo Studio, and Think Ink are just a few popular options you can look at. The price will depend on the size and design of your tattoo, but it will on estimate take you a few thousand takas. While many tattoo parlours also do piercings with surgical needles, there is always the option to go for the old school beauty salons such as Farzana Shakil's Makeover Salon and Persona. Centres such as Cosmetic Surgery Centre also do piercings for about Tk. 2000-3000 or more depending on the location of the piercing.

By Adiba Mahbub Proma

Contacts: Dhaka Tattoo Studio, Shop #28,29 (2nd Floor), Capital Siraj Center, 10 New Baily Road, Dhaka. +88-0193-399-9933. Think Ink, +88-0167-494-2468 (by appointment only).

Photo: Arif Hafiz