

A graphic illustration featuring a red heart with a yellow flame rising from its top. A green vine with leaves is wrapped around the heart, and a white dagger is positioned diagonally across it, with red blood dripping from its tip. The word "Tattoo" is written in a large, blue, gothic-style font, and "Aftercare Instructions" is written in a smaller, blue, serif font to its right.

# Tattoo Aftercare Instructions

1. Leave bandage on for at least four (4) hours, but no more than twelve (12), to prevent any bacteria from entering and to allow blood to clot.
2. With clean hands, remove the bandage and wash gently with cool water and mild anti-bacterial soap. Make sure you remove all traces of blood. **DO NOT** use a washcloth to wash your tattoo. This will be too abrasive to a new tattoo. Pat the tattoo dry with a soft clean cloth. **DO NOT** rub it. **DO NOT** use alcohol or hydrogen peroxide to clean your tattoo. Your tattoo needs to stay moist in order to heal and these type products will cause it to dry out.
3. Cover the tattoo with a **VERY THIN** layer of anti-bacterial ointment such as Neosporin, A&D Ointment or Bacitraycin. Tattoo Goo, Tattoo Lube and other tattoo specific ointments are also good to use. **DO NOT** use Vaseline or petroleum jelly as it will fade the color of you tattoo.
4. Once the initial covering is removed, do not cover your tattoo again during the healing process. Your tattoo will need to be exposed to the air in order to heal.
5. Wash the tattoo at least twice a day for the first week. Apply ointment three (3) or four (4) times a day until the tattoo is healed, especially if you feel the tattoo begin to dry out. Keeping your tattoo moist will ensure the least amount of scabbing and peeling, thereby reducing the fading of color. Make sure hands are clean each time your tattoo is touched. The introduction of bacteria or dirt will cause the tattoo to become infected.
6. The tattoo will "bleed" ink during the first few days of healing. Wear clothes that you wouldn't mind getting a bit of ink on.
7. **DO NOT** swim, soak in a hot tub or take a bath for two weeks after getting your tattoo. Showers are ok, but do not expose your tattoo to water for extended periods. Chemicals in pools/hot tubs can cause your tattoo to fade and the bacteria present in most lakes/streams may cause infection. Over exposure to water will cause your tattoo's scab to soften and come off more quickly which also take will more ink with it.
8. **DO NOT** tan for at least two weeks after tattooing. This allows your tattoo to heal more quickly. After two weeks, you may lie in the sun or get tanning as long as you apply a light layer of sun screen SPF 25 or higher on your tattoo. Sunlight and UV rays have a bleaching effect on the ink pigment in your tattoo (especially bright colors and black). Over exposure will cause your tattoo to fade and can cause you to have to have it "touched up" to regain color.
9. Like any other wound to the skin, your tattoo will itch during the healing process. **DO NOT SCRATCH IT**. Scratching or picking will remove the scab and possibly the ink with it. If itching persists, lightly slap the skin to relieve it or apply a thin layer of ointment (as described above).

If you have any questions not covered by this document, contact your tattoo artist for more information/instruction.