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Think before you
ink...

Tattoos

Step 1: . Know before you go. Getting a tattoo can have health risks. Tattoo establishments are not regulated or inspected under Japanese law. Such health concerns may include but are not limited to Hepatitis C, serious skin infections and HIV/AIDS. In the US, states generally have health regulations governing tattoo establishments and the FDA regulates tattoo inks.

Step 2: The following are examples of unsafe practices to be aware of; this list is not all inclusive:

- Sharing or re-using needles between patrons
- Sharing or re-using ink between patrons
- Diluting ink with non-sterile water
- Using ink that is not meant for human use
- Not using gloves
- General uncleanliness

It is highly recommended that you avoid receiving a tattoo from an establishment with any of the above practices. Please notify the III Marine Expeditionary Force Surgeon's office (DSN 622-3900 / 098-954-3900 or nho-ki-jpeach@med.navy.mil) of any establishments that are using these unsafe practices or if you have become sick from tattooing.

Step 3: The following items are examples of some sanitary tattoo practices, this list is not all inclusive:

- Single use ink
- Single use or properly sterilized needles
- Proper hand washing technique and general cleanliness

References:

MCO P1020.34G

MARADMIN 029/10

"In accordance with the references tattooing or branding of any part of the head, face or neck is prohibited. In other areas of the body, tattoos or brands that are prejudicial to good order, discipline, and morale or are of a nature to bring discredit upon the United States Military are also prohibited."

Notes:

For additional information:

<http://blogs.cdc.gov/publichealthmatters/2012/08/the-hidden-dangers-of-getting-inked/>

<http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm316357.htm>