

I Love Tattoos

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Tattoo aftercare

Your tattoo is a healing open wound for the next two weeks. Follow these steps to keep it clean, prevent infection, and protect the work so it stays crisp.

First 2–4 hours

Leave the bandage on for 2 to 4 hours after you leave the shop. If you were sent home with second-skin film, follow the separate film-removal instructions instead.

First wash

Remove the bandage. Wash with clean hands and lukewarm water using a mild, unscented soap (Dr. Bronner's Baby, Dial Gold, or similar). Pat dry with a clean paper towel. Never re-bandage with a non-breathable wrap.

Days 2 through 14

Wash gently 2 to 3 times per day. After each wash, apply a thin layer of fragrance-free lotion (Aquaphor for the first 3 days, then switch to Lubriderm, Cetaphil, or similar). Thin enough that it absorbs — never shiny or gooey.

Do not

Do not pick or scratch scabs and flakes — they will fall off on their own. Do not submerge: no swimming pools, hot tubs, baths, lakes, or ocean for 2 weeks. Showers are fine. Do not expose to direct sun until fully healed; after that, use SPF 30+ on the tattoo for the rest of your life if you want the colors to last.

Clothing and bedding

Wear loose, clean clothing over the area. Sleep on a clean pillowcase or sheet for the first week. Tight clothes and dirty fabric are the two most common ways aftercare goes wrong.

When to call a doctor

Some redness, swelling, and clear weeping is normal for 2 to 3 days. Call a doctor if you develop fever, spreading redness past the tattoo outline, hot skin, pus, or red streaks moving outward. Then text the shop so we know.