

Ear Piercing and Keloids: What Can Go Wrong ?

This flyer is to raise awareness of a less common,
yet a significantly disfiguring complication of
piercing

What Is a Keloid Scar?

A keloid is a scar that grows to be far bigger than the original wound. They can be itchy, painful and unsightly. They may develop within a **few weeks up to one year**

Who Gets Keloids?

They are more common in **dark skinned people**, and during **teenage** years.

How Common Are Keloids?

One study suggests that they occur in as many as 1 / 40 people having their ears pierced, but another suggests it is 1/4000.

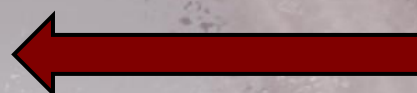
A “dumbbell” keloid from ear piercing.

The ear is especially susceptible to keloid formation



What to Do?

If you experience any of these symptoms, please **remove the earring immediately** and consult your GP or a plastic surgeon.



What Are The Early Signs of Keloid?

Persistent itching around the piercing site could be the first and commonest sign of keloid formation affecting 67-95%.

Thickening and redness around the piercing site – which could be mistaken for infection

Painful lump around the piercing site which could take up to few months to develop and continues to grow.

How to Treat?

Look out for growing scars after piercing.

Pressure clips and silicone may help to reduce growth.

A Plastic Surgeon can offer various treatment from injections to surgical removal. Treatment becomes harder as the scar grows. **Surgery is difficult** and results cannot be guaranteed- there is always a risk of recurrence as a new wound is being created.