

Do not bandage the tattoo, if you can avoid it. All wounds need to breathe if they are to heal properly.

Wash the tattoo using your fingertips or hand only. Use a mild antibacterial soap and warm water. Take care to remove all traces of blood as this will cause scabbing. Do not scrub the tattoo with a washcloth during the two week healing period. Always gently pat the tattoo dry with a clean soft cloth or just let it air dry.

Apply a thin coat of moisturizer to the tattoo. Jergens, Keri Lotion, Weber's, Tattoo Goo, Cherry Balm all work well. (Just enough to make it shine, a little goes a long way...) Work it in well. Dab off all the excess with a paper towel. You should barely be able to tell that it's there... This is just enough to keep the tattoo moist and to keep it from scabbing. Your body heat will liquefy the ointment and it may become glossy looking or runny. This means there's too much on there. Dab more off. Too much ointment will only suffocate the tattoo and liquefy any scabs that may have formed causing the ink to fall out and look blotchy. Do not use lotions that contain color or fragrance or sparkles until the healing is complete. (Usually anywhere from ten days to two weeks; Possibly longer for slower healers.)

Your skin will form a protective layer no matter what you do. If you do not keep it moist or keep it too moist (it's a personal balance, different for each individual), it will form a thick, hard scab that may crack when you move. When you form this kind of a scab the ink sits within it and slowly heals into the skin. When the tattoo is kept moist it doesn't have a chance to form a scab but does form a thin membrane to protect the tattoo while it heals. This layer peels off very similar to a sunburn (do not peel your tattoo, you will pull the ink out!) and it is normal to see small flakes of colored skin falling off during this stage of healing.

You must keep your tattoo clean, however, long showers or baths must be avoided for 2 weeks. Prolonged soaking can and will loosen scabs if any have formed, or will soak through the soft tissue and cause your ink to flow down the drain. This includes Swimming in the Ocean or a Pool, Hot Tubs, and Saunas. Short showers are best, under ten minutes if possible.

Please refrain from scratching or picking at the tattoo. Scrubbing with a washcloth can be very harsh on a tattoo and will cause your colors to fade. It is normal for the tattoo to become very itchy during the healing time. To relieve this, scratch around the tattoo, or slap it with your hand (this will sting it and take away the itch).

No but's about it, the sun is BAD for your tattoo, even if you've had it for a long time. A sunburn on a new tattoo can cause a lot of problems. It will dry out your tattoo and cause it to form a horrendous scab much of the time causing the tattoo to fade before it is even healed. It will take much longer to heal completely. It promotes scarring in a new tattoo. Wait until it is fully healed to go back in the sun or a tanning bed and make sure you put on a high quality SUNBLOCK. (Do not apply sunblock while the tattoo is healing.) The tattoo is under your skin, and your tan will form above it. If you get too dark, some colors (white, yellow, pink, and orange) may not show up as brightly as they could. Over time, excessive exposure to sunlight will cause your tattoo to fade no matter what colors are used.

Remember that hands and feet reproduce skin cells much faster than other parts of the body. A tattoo in these areas will sometimes take an extra two weeks to heal. During this time refrain from washing dishes, wearing gloves, or wearing socks and shoes (sandals must not rub the tattoo). Any friction of this type WILL wear away the tattoo within a very short period of time.