

FAST FASHION

Don't Show or Tell:

Why You Should Cover Up Your Piercings

Edmonton Daily Mail
– Lauren Tate

We've looked at many fashion issues in this column: from hairstyles to belts to shoes. Today we are going to discuss personal hardware, or piercings. So what is "in" and what is "out" in body piercing?

"Body piercing is a personal choice, so whether you get your tongue, eyebrow, cheek, bellybutton or ears pierced is up to you," Dan Bright told Fast Fashion. "The only time that you should be really careful about what piercings you show is when you are going for a job interview."

Strange as it may seem, if you are considering a piercing, a nipple or your bellybutton is probably a better idea than your nose. "Your piercing may look really good to you, but when you are going for a job interview, you might want to hide it," said Bright. "It is a lot easier to cover up something below your neck than something on your face." Many companies that are more conservative might find a tongue piercing disgusting, so even those hidden piercings could cause problems.

Last year a personal image company, PIC Inc. asked nearly 500 people in the workplace about their piercings and found that 42 percent admitted to having piercings (not including ears) or tattoos. Of these respondents, 85 percent believed that piercings can affect their job search, so they said that they cover up their piercings.

Bright agrees. "In a job interview, you want your employer to take you seriously, not just be focused on your nose." Individual expression is an important right, but many corporations think that someone who has obvious piercings is more likely to be a rebel and won't fit into the corporate environment.

"In a job interview, the employer is just going to see the piercing, not the person," Bright said. "The foremost question on the employer's mind will be: What is this person trying to prove?" He recommends removing a piercing from your face before an interview and covering up the location with make-up. Later you can wear your piercing during social occasions, but he warns that even then it might not be acceptable with some companies.

Kim Macdonald, whose job it is to hire executives for companies, disagrees with Bright. "I think an employer should look at the whole person as an individual and ask: Who is this person? What can this individual do? Does this person fit into this company?" However, before sending someone with an obvious piercing to a company with a strong conservative image, she admitted, "I would first refer the individual to an image consultant."

Macdonald also pointed out that people who work at call centres or who don't see clients need not be so careful about their appearance. "I would be surprised if such a company refused to hire someone because of a nose stud," she concluded.