

Suggested Aftercare for Oral Piercings

Effective: 5/1/22

Cleaning Solutions

- Alcohol-free and hydrogen peroxide-free mouth rinse. Or you can use dry mouth oral rinse for hydration
- Plain clean water. Bottled or filtered water is preferred.
- Packaged sterile saline solution with no additives (read the label). This is not for internal use but external use only (like cleaning the outside of your lip piercing).
- Regardless of the brand of saline, the can should list sterile and isotonic. The only ingredients included should be water and 0.9% or 9mg/ml sodium chloride. Mixing your own sea salt solution is no longer a suggested practice from the Association of Professional Piercers. Mixing your own sea salt solution will commonly result in the product being far too salty and strong. This can over dry the piercing and interfere with healing.
- Do not use contact solution, eye drops, or nasal rinse products on your piercing.

Cleaning Instructions

INTERNAL:

- Wash your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning or touching your piercing for any reason.
- Keeping good oral hygiene practices is important in maintaining a healthy mouth and piercing. You will want to floss, brush and use mouth rinse at least twice a day. It is vital to not overuse the mouth rinse.
- Gently brush the jewelry with a clean toothbrush regularly to avoid plaque build up.
- Rinse with water (bottled or filtered) thoroughly after every time you eat, drink or smoke.

EXTERNAL:

- Wash your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning or touching your piercing for any reason.
- Be sure to rinse your piercing thoroughly with warm water in the shower once a day. Then rinse with saline twice a day.
- Gently remove any discharge or crust that may have built up on your jewelry, then dry the area carefully with gauze.

What Is Normal?

- For the first three to five days you may experience swelling, light bleeding, bruising, tenderness, and/or a whitish to yellowish secretion that may form crust on the jewelry.
- After the first week, you may continue to experience some minor swelling and secretion.
- A piercing might seem healed before the healing process is complete. This is because piercings heal from the outside in. Although it feels fine, the tissue remains fragile on the inside. Be patient and keep cleaning throughout the entire healing period.
- For lip piercings, it is typical for the jewelry to “nest” slightly into the lip (on the inside) once it is healed.
- Even healed piercings that you have had for years can shrink or close within a few hours if the jewelry is removed. This varies from person to person; if you like your piercing, keep jewelry in! Do not leave the hole empty for a long period of time.

What to Avoid

- Do not play with your jewelry. Long term effects include permanent damage to teeth and gums.
- Avoid undue trauma; excessive talking or playing with the jewelry can cause scar tissue, migration, and other complications.
- Avoid using mouthwash containing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide. It can irritate the piercing and delay healing.
- Avoid oral sexual contact including wet kissing or oral sex during healing.
- Avoid chewing on tobacco, gum, fingernails, pencils, sunglasses, and other foreign objects that could harbor bacteria.
- Avoid sharing plates, cups, and eating utensils.
- Avoid using straws. Straw use can increase the risk of swelling and bleeding.
- Minimize the intake of smoking and vaping (tobacco or cannabis). It increases risks and prolongs healing time.
- Avoid aspirin, alcohol, and large amounts of caffeine for as long as you are experiencing bleeding or swelling