



## **Suggested Aftercare for Oral Piercings**

### **Cleaning Solutions:**

Use any or all of the following solutions for inside the mouth:

- Antimicrobial or antibacterial alcohol-free mouth rinse\*
- Plain clean water
- Packaged sterile saline (with no additives, read the label) is a gentle choice for piercing aftercare. Saline for contact lenses should not be used as piercing aftercare. Wound wash saline is available as a spray at pharmacies throughout North America.
- Sea salt mixture: Dissolve 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon (.75 to 1.42 grams) of non-iodized (iodine-free) sea salt into one cup (8 oz / 250 ml) of warm distilled or bottled water. A stronger mixture is not better; a saline solution that is too strong can irritate the piercing.

(If you have high blood pressure or a heart condition, please check with your doctor before using a saline product as your primary cleaning solution.)

(Consult your piercer, the APP website, or call (888) 888-APP for current suggested products.)

### **Cleaning Instructions for Inside the Mouth:**

Rinse mouth as needed (4-5 times) daily with a cleaning solution for 30-60 seconds, after meals and at bedtime during the entire healing period. When you over clean, it may cause discoloration or irritation of your mouth and piercing.

### **Cleaning Instructions for the Exterior of Labret (Cheek & Lip) Piercings:**

- WASH your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning or touching your piercing for any reason.
- SALINE rinse as needed during healing. For certain placements it may be easier to apply using clean gauze saturated with saline solution. A brief rinse afterward will remove any residue.
- If your piercer suggests using soap, gently lather around the piercing and rinse as needed. Avoid using harsh soaps, or soaps with dyes, fragrances, or triclosan.
- RINSE thoroughly to remove all traces of the soap from the piercing. It is not necessary to rotate the jewelry through the piercing.
- DRY by gently patting with clean, disposable paper products because cloth towels can harbor bacteria and snag on jewelry, causing injury.

## **What Is Normal?**

- For the first three to five days: significant swelling, light bleeding, bruising, and/or tenderness.
- After that: Some swelling, light secretion of a whitish yellow fluid (not pus).
- A piercing may seem healed before the healing process is complete. This is because they heal from the outside in, and although it feels fine, the tissue remains fragile on the inside. Be patient and keep cleaning throughout the entire healing period.
- Even healed piercings can shrink or close in minutes after having been there for years! This varies from person to person; if you like your piercing, keep jewelry in-do not leave the hole empty.

## **What To Do To Help Reduce Swelling:**

- Allow small pieces of ice to dissolve in the mouth.
- Take an over the counter, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen or naproxen sodium according to package instructions.
- Don't speak or move your jewelry more than necessary.
- Sleep with your head elevated above your heart during the first few nights.

## **To Maintain Good Oral Hygiene:**

- Use a new soft-bristled toothbrush and store it in a clean area away from other toothbrushes.
- Brush your teeth and use your chosen rinse (saline or mouthwash) after every meal.
- During healing floss daily, and gently brush your teeth, tongue and jewelry. Once healed, brush the jewelry more thoroughly to avoid plaque buildup.

## **Oral Piercing Hints and Tips:**

### **Jewelry:**

- Once the swelling has subsided, it is vital to replace the original, longer jewelry with a shorter post to avoid intra-oral damage. Consult your piercer for their downsize policy.
- Because this necessary jewelry change often occurs during healing, it should be done by a qualified piercer.
- Contact your piercer for a non-metallic jewelry alternative if your metal jewelry must be temporarily removed (such as for a medical procedure).
- Should you decide you no longer want the piercing, simply remove the jewelry (or have a professional piercer remove it) and continue cleaning the piercing until the hole closes. In most cases only a small mark will remain.
- In the even an infection is suspected, quality jewelry or an inert alternative should be left in place to allow for drainage or the infection. Should the jewelry be removed, the surface cells can close sealing the infection inside the piercing channel, resulting in an abscess. Until an infection is cleared up, the jewelry in!

**Eating:**

- Slowly eat small bites of food.
- Avoid eating spicy, salty, acidic, or hot temperature foods or beverages for a few days.
- Cold foods and beverages are soothing and help reduce swelling.
- Foods like mashed potatoes and oatmeal are hard to eat because they stick to your mouth and jewelry. For tongue piercing, try to keep your tongue level in your mouth as you eat because the jewelry can get between your teeth when your tongue turns.
- For labret (cheek and lip) piercings be cautious about opening your mouth too wide as this can result in the jewelry catching on your teeth.
- Each body is unique, and healing times vary considerably. If you have any questions, please contact your piercer.

**What To Avoid:**

- Do not play with your jewelry. Long term effects include permanent damage to teeth, gums, and other oral structures. See the APP's Brochure: Oral Piercing Risks and Safety Measures for more information. Avoid undue trauma; excessive talking or playing with the jewelry during healing can cause the formation of unsightly and uncomfortable scar tissue, migration, and other complications. Avoid using mouthwash containing alcohol. It can irritate the piercing and delay healing.
- Avoid oral sexual contact including French (wet) kissing or oral sex during healing (even with a long-term partner).
- Avoid chewing gum, tobacco, fingernails, pencils, sunglasses, etc.
- Avoid sharing plates, cups, and eating utensils.
- Avoid smoking! It increases risks and lengthens healing time.
- Avoid stress and all recreational drug use.
- Avoid aspirin, alcohol, and large amounts of caffeine if you are experiencing bleeding or swelling.
- Avoid submerging healing piercings in bodies of water such as lakes, pools, etc.

**Each body is unique, and healing times vary considerably. If you have any questions, please contact Underdog Tattoo Co, Brandi Creasap.**