



ORAL PIERCING AFTERCARE

CLEANING SOLUTIONS

- Antimicrobial or antibacterial alcohol-free mouthwash
- 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.

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 or a Q-Tip saturated with saline solution. A brief rinse afterward will remove any residue.
- **AIR-DRY** Do not use cloth towels as they can harbor bacteria and snag on jewelry, causing injury.

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.

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.

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 build up.

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 event 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 up sealing the infection inside the piercing channel, resulting in an abscess. Until an infection is cleared up, leave 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.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Do not play with your jewelry. Long term effects include permanent damage to teeth, gums, and other oral structures.
- 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” 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 as long as 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 your piercer.

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Facebook: Piercingsbychrissyvon

Instagram: Chrissyvonx

Email: Piercingsbychrissyvon@gmail.com