

CARRIBBEAN CONNECTION

Jacksonville Beach, Florida

Aftercare Instructions for **Oral Piercings**

For additional information call:

(904) 241-4231

(904) 633-9161

Cleaning Solutions

Any mouthwash antiseptic that is recommended by the American Dental Association (it will have the ADA logo on it), such as Listerine or the generic of, is a proper solution. Scope is just a breath freshener and is not recommended by the ADA. The color of the antiseptic will not interfere with the healing of your piercing but do expect discoloration (if you use blue Listerine expect some blue discoloring in your mouth).

Cleaning Instructions

Rinse mouth for 30-60 seconds with solution (see Cleaning Solutions above) after you eat, drink or smoke anything for the entire minimum initial healing time. Also rinse when you wake up in the morning and before you go to bed at night. If you are cleaning too often, the top of your tongue will start to turn a white or yellowish color. Continue to clean your piercing but reduce the number of times you are cleaning it per day. A new soft bristled toothbrush should be purchased to help reduce the bacteria that are introduced to your mouth.

What to Expect

Swelling of the area is perfectly normal during the first part of healing an oral piercing. Swelling can be reduced by sucking on clean ice. Chipped or shaved ice or small cubes are best. The majority of the swelling usually lasts anywhere from 2-6 days.

Some tenderness or discomfort in the area of a new piercing is not unusual. You may feel pinching, tightness, aching or other unpleasant sensations off and on for several days or longer.

Any new piercing can bleed off and on for a few days. There can also be bleeding under the surface resulting in temporary bruising or discoloration. This is perfectly normal and does not indicate any complication.

Do not be alarmed if you see a fairly liquid, yellowish secretion coming from the piercing. This is blood plasma, lymph and dead cells, which is perfectly normal. All healing piercings secrete, it just looks different inside the mouth as it doesn't have a chance to dry and crust as it does on ear and body piercings. This is not pus but does indicate a healing piercing.

Plaque may form on tongue jewelry, commonly on the bottom ball and/or post. Gently scrub your jewelry with a soft bristled toothbrush. If you are diligent with oral hygiene, the jewelry will not need to be removed for cleaning.

Piercings may tend to have a series of "ups and downs" during healing by seeming healed and then regressing. Try to be patient and DO keep cleaning during the entire initial hearing time, even if the piercing seems healed sooner.

(CONTINUED)

Once initial swelling is down (4-6 weeks), replacing your bar style jewelry with a shorter bar may be wise. Jewelry that fits more snug is less likely to irritate your mouth or get between your teeth and be bitten.

If you like your piercing, leave jewelry in at all times. Even healed piercings can shrink or close in minutes after having been there for years. This varies from person to person and even if your earlobe piercings stay open without jewelry, your oral piercing may not!

Keep following the care procedures during the entire minimum initial healing time, even if the piercing seems healed sooner.

Disclaimer

These guidelines are based on a combination of vast professional experiences, common sense, research and extensive clinical practice. This is not to be considered a substitute for medical advice from a doctor. Be aware, however, that many doctors have no specific training or experience regarding piercing and may not be educated on how to best assist you.

Oral Piercing Tips and Hints:

Some Piercees will carry a spare ball in their wallet or purse. This is particularly advisable if you wear non-metallic balls such as acrylic, which is more fragile.

Tongue:

Try to focus on keeping your tongue level in your mouth to avoid biting on the jewelry as you talk and eat. Your mouth is likely to feel uncoordinated at first, but this will pass.

While eating solid foods, try to place bits of small food directly on molars with clean fingers or fork. Food that is already in the back of your mouth doesn't have to get moved there by your tongue.

Gently brush your tongue and jewelry while you are healing. Once healed, brush tongue and jewelry thoroughly and daily to keep plaque away.

Lip and Cheek:

Be cautious about opening your mouth too wide when you eat, as this can result in the backing of your jewelry catching on your teeth. Take small bites and go slowly at first.

The outside of the piercing may become somewhat red or pink during healing. This is normal.

Refer to the "Aftercare Instructions for Body and Facial Piercings" sheet for instructions on how to care for the exterior surface of such a piercing.

What to Do

Sleep with your head elevated during the first few nights of healing. Keeping your head above your heart will help reduce swelling.

An over-the-counter anti-inflammatory, such as ibuprofen (Motrin, Advil, etc.), taken according to package instructions can help reduce swelling.

Be sure to clean your toothbrush well between usages. Failure to do so will carry bacteria from one use to the next. A sensitive type of toothpaste may be less irritating on your piercing.

Double check often, with clean hands, to make sure the threaded ends on your jewelry are on tight.

Take small bites and chew slowly when eating while you are getting used to your new jewelry. Cold foods and drinks such as ice cream, crushed ice and ice water feel good and can help reduce swelling. Try to fill up on liquids and foods you do not have to chew much, such as mashed potatoes, apple sauce and ice cream.

Get plenty of sleep and eat a nutritious diet. The healthier your lifestyle, the easier it will be for your piercing to heal.

What NOT to Do

Avoid chewing tobacco, gum or any foreign, non-edible objects, such as pen caps, during the healing process. Do not share cups, glasses or eating utensils with anyone else.

Stay away from large amounts of caffeine, aspirin and beer for at least 2 weeks after the initial piercing. Beer is a liquid form of yeast and will cause your oral piercing to swell a lot. Avoid eating hot temperature, spicy, acidic or salty foods and drinks for the first 2 weeks.

To avoid other cross-contamination, avoid oral sexual contact, including French (wet) kissing, during the entire initial healing period, even if you are in a monogamous relationship.

Reducing smoking or quitting is highly recommended while healing an oral piercing. Smoking increases risks and can lengthen healing time. Avoid undue stress and recreational drug usage.

Do not play with the piercing for the initial healing period beyond the necessary movement for speaking and eating. Try to avoid other disturbances such as excessive talking and actively playing with the jewelry. This will help keep swelling to a minimum.

Even after healing, excessive play with your oral piercing can result in permanent damage to teeth, gums and oral structures. Be careful with your piercing!