

Hints and Tips

Jewelry

Once the swelling has subsided, **it is vital to replace the original, longer jewelry with a shorter post.** Consult your piercer for their downsize policy.

Because this necessary jewelry change may occur during healing, it should be done by a qualified piercer.

With clean hands or paper product, be sure to regularly check threaded ends on your jewelry for tightness ("Righty-tighty, lefty-loosey").

Carry a clean spare ball in case of loss or breakage.

Contact your piercer if your jewelry must be temporarily removed (such as for a medical procedure). There are non-metallic jewelry alternatives.

Should you decide you no longer want the piercing, seek professional help in the removal of the jewelry and continue cleaning the piercing until the hole has closed. In most cases only a small indentation will remain.

Eating

Slowly eat small bites of food, placed directly onto the molars.

Avoid eating spicy, salty, acidic, or hot temperature foods or beverages for a few days.

Cold foods and beverage are soothing and help reduce swelling.

For tongue piercing, try to keep your tongue level in your mouth as you chew and swallow.

For labret (cheek and lip) piercings: Be cautious about opening your mouth too wide as this can result in the backing of the jewelry catching on the teeth.

Each body is unique and healing times vary considerably. If you have any questions, please contact your piercer.

Your _____ piercing

is expected to take _____ or longer to heal

_____ Piercer

_____ Jewelry

_____ Earliest Change/Downsize Date

For any additional information contact your piercer.



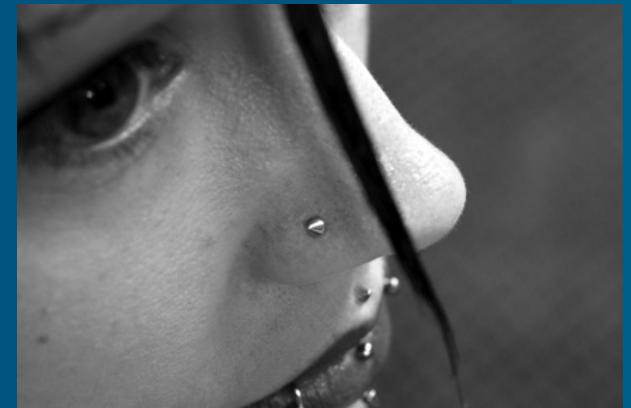
Association of Professional Piercers

www.safepiercing.org

(888) 888-1APP

Disclaimer: These guidelines are based on a combination of vast professional experience, common sense, research and extensive clinical practice. This is not to be considered a substitute for medical advice from a doctor. If you suspect an infection, seek medical attention. Keep in mind that the removal of jewelry can lead to further complications. Be aware that many doctors have not received specific training regarding piercing. Your local piercer may be able to refer you to a piercing friendly medical or dental professional. See the APP Brochure "Troubleshooting For You And Your Healthcare Professional"

Suggested Aftercare Guidelines



for Oral Piercings

The use of this brochure does not imply the piercer is an APP member. For a current list of APP piercers, please visit www.safepiercing.org. If your piercer claims to be an APP piercer and is not listed on the site please notify us.

Cleaning Solutions

Use either one or both of the following solutions for **inside** the mouth:

- ▶ Antimicrobial or antibacterial alcohol-free mouth rinse*
- ▶ Packaged sterile saline solution* with **no** additives (read the label!) or non-iodized sea salt mixture: Dissolve 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon of non-iodized (iodine-free) sea salt into one cup (8 oz) of warm distilled or bottled water. A stronger mixture is **not** better! 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 inside the mouth as your primary cleaning solution.)

Cleaning Instructions for the *inside* of the mouth

Rinse mouth 4-5 times daily with cleaning solution for 30-60 seconds after meals and at bedtime during the entire healing period. If you over clean, it may cause discoloration or irritation of tongue.

Cleaning Instructions for the *exterior* of labret (cheek and lip) piercings

Soak in saline solution and/or wash with liquid antimicrobial or germicidal soap* as described below:

- 1) **WASH** your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning, or touching on or near your piercing for any reason.
- 2) **SALINE** soak at least two to three times daily. Simply soak directly in a cup of warm saline solution for a few minutes. The longer you soak, the better. For certain placements it may be easier to apply using fresh gauze or a cotton ball saturated with saline solution. A brief rinse will remove any residue.
- 3) **SOAP** no more than once or twice a day. While showering, lather up a pearl size drop of the soap to clean the jewelry and the piercing. Leave the cleanser on the piercing no more than thirty seconds, then rinse thoroughly to remove all traces of the soap from the piercing.
- 4) **DRY** with disposable paper products such as gauze or tissues, because cloth towels can harbor bacteria and catch on new piercings causing injury. Pat gently to avoid trauma.

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 healing is complete. This is because piercings heal from the outside in, and although it feels healed 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, leave the jewelry in place.

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.
- ▶ 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 keep it clean.
- ▶ 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.

Stay healthy

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

WHAT TO AVOID

- ▶ **DO NOT PLAY WITH THE JEWELRY.** Long-term effects of playing with, and clicking the jewelry against the teeth can result in permanent damage to teeth 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 any mouthwash containing alcohol. It can irritate the area and delay healing.
- ▶ Avoid oral sexual contact including French (wet) kissing or oral sex during healing (even with a long term partner).
- ▶ Avoid chewing on 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 any aspirin or alcohol, and large amounts of caffeine.
- ▶ Avoid submerging in bodies of water such as lakes, pools, etc.

**Consult your piercer or the APP website, or call (888) 888-1APP for current suggested products. This will allow us to keep current as advances are made in the field.*

