

March 7, 2011

In this issue of our newsletter:

Oral Piercing- Is it worth it?

If you're thinking about getting a piercing- or if you already have one or more- here are some health risks you should know about.

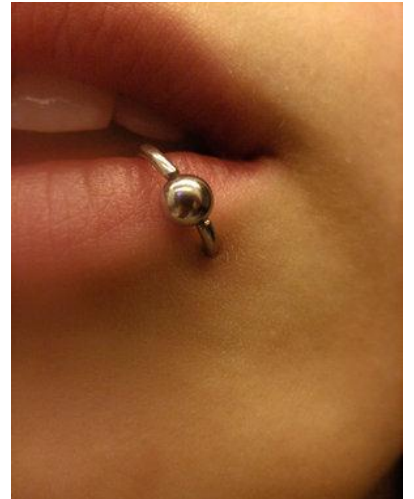
In particular, piercing the tongue, lips, cheeks, or the uvula (the tiny tissue that hangs at the back of the throat), is not as safe as you may think. That's because the mouth's moist environment is home to huge amounts of bacteria, creating an ideal place for infection to start. That's only one of many problems piercing can cause.

The risks

For starters, a mouth piercing can interfere with speaking, chewing, or swallowing. That may seem like just an inconvenience, until you consider that it may cause:

Infection:

Given that the mouth contains bacteria, oral piercing carries the potential for infection at the site of the piercing. Touching your mouth jewelry, such as tongue barbells and lip and cheek labrettes, can increase the risk for infection. It creates a perfect opportunity for bacteria on the hands to infect piercing sites. And food particles that collect around piercing are breeding grounds for bacteria.



Prolonged bleeding:

Damage to your tongue's blood vessels can cause serious blood loss.

Swelling:

Swelling commonly occurs after oral piercing. There have been some reports of swelling after tongue piercing that has been serious enough to block the airway.

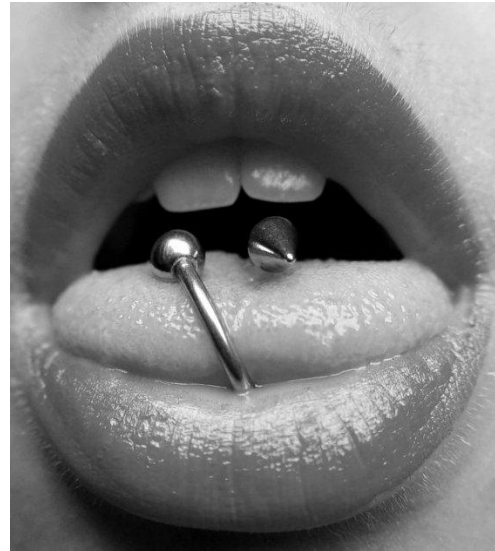
Nerve damage:

If this happens, you may experience temporary or permanent damage. The injured nerve might make your tongue feel numb. Other injuries could change your sense of taste or how you move your mouth.

Excessive drooling and difficulty speaking and eating: It also can affect your ability to pronounce words clearly. The hoop-, ring-, stud, and barbell-shaped jewelry can also get in the way of your ability to talk and eat.

Damage to teeth and gums:

Some people also develop a habit of biting the barbells, or playing with the balls in their mouths, which can injure the gums and lead to cracked, scratched or sensitive teeth. This damage may result in the need for dental treatment, such as crowns, fillings or root canals.



Allergic reactions:

The metal may cause an allergic reaction at the pierced site.

X-rays: Mouth jewelry can interfere with dental radiographs (x-rays).

Bloodborne disease transmission:

Oral piercing has been identified as a possible factor in transmission of hepatitis B, C, D and G.

Heart Problems:

Oral piercing carries a potential risk of endocarditis, and inflammation of the heart valves or tissues. Bacteria can enter the bloodstream through the piercing site in the mouth and travel to the heart, where they can multiply.

These harmful effects can happen during the piercing, soon after, or even long after the procedure. That's why the American Dental Association opposes the practice of piercing in or around the mouth- because it's bad for oral health.

If you already have piercing



- Contact your dentist or physician immediately for any signs of infection-such as swelling, pain, fever, chills, shaking or a red-streaked appearance around the site of the piercing.

- Keep the piercing site clean and free of any matter that may collect on the jewelry by using a mouth rinse after every meal. Look for products that display the American Dental Association Seal of Acceptance.cally-with clean hands-because beads can loosen on their threads. Checking can help prevent you from swallowing or choking on your jewelry.

- When taking part in sports, remove the jewelry and protect your mouth with a mouthguard.

- See your dentist regularly, and remember to brush twice a day and floss daily.

- Most important consider removing mouth jewelry before it causes a problem.

For more information about oral piercing, visit the American Dental Association website at www.ada.org and type "oral piercing" in the search box.

Body piercing is a popular form of self-expression. Many people choose piercing as a way to follow a trend or create a certain look. But piercing isn't just a matter of style-it's a health issue too.

The bottom line: Don't pierce on a whim. The piercing will be an added responsibility to your life. The pierced site will need constant attention and upkeep. Are the risks worth it to you?

From ADA, American Dental Association America's leading advocate for oral health

For your better health!

Tuckerton Dental