

Suggested Healing and Aftercare Guidelines for Your New Piercing

Remember: a piercing is a wound. Consequently, you should expect tenderness, swelling, discoloration, and possibly bruising, bleeding, and itching. Also, a natural part of the process for healing any wound includes the secretion of a white-yellow fluid containing dead cells and blood plasma. This fluid will dry and form a crust on your jewelry. To remove this crust, refer to the Primary Suggestions for healing your piercing.

Taking Care of Your Oral Piercing...

Rinses

The best way to care for your oral piercing is to rinse your mouth for 30-60 seconds with a medical grade oral rinse after you brush your teeth in the morning, and after you brush your teeth at night. Do not use ordinary mouthwash, because most brands contain alcohol or other antiseptics that produce a burning feeling. These ingredients can irritate your new piercing and hinder the healing process. We use and recommend Tech 2000, a non-alcohol based mouth rinse. Be careful not to over clean your new piercing as this will also slow the healing process.

Sea Salt Rinse

For the first 3-6 weeks, you should do a sea salt rinse after eating, after smoking, or after drinking anything but bottled water.

First: fill a fresh disposable with one cup of warm water, and add 1/4 teaspoon of non-iodized sea salt, stirring until the salt is completely dissolved.

Second: rinse your mouth for about 15 seconds with the salt solution.

The salt rinses will soothe your new piercing. The rinses feel really good, and also help calm the itching part of the healing phase.

Ice

Shaved ice and cold liquids can help reduce swelling in oral piercings. Enjoying popcicles and ice cream are also good ways to reduce swelling, but be sure to do a sea salt rinse following your snack. Remember: do a sea salt rinse after you eat or drink anything other than plain bottled water.

Brushing Your Teeth

It is important to brush your teeth three times daily while your piercing is healing. Brushing your teeth will cut down on the amount of bacteria and food particles in your mouth. It is suggested that you purchase a new toothbrush to use during the initial healing period. Make sure to use a tooth paste that DOES NOT contain whiteners. Also, plaque (a white, crusty shell) will begin to build up on your tongue jewelry if you do not gently brush the balls and post. You should brush your jewelry daily if you want to prevent plaque buildup.

Additional Tips

Try to eat very slowly. Place only small portions of food in your mouth at one time. At first, eating may seem awkward, but this is mainly due to swelling.

Don't use tobacco products or chewing gum, and don't bite your nails. **NEVER** play with your jewelry, or touch your new piercing with unwashed hands. In other words, the less you move your jewelry, and the fewer things you put in your mouth, the quicker your piercing will heal. Even after your piercing is healed, be wary of causing excessive friction between your jewelry and your gums and teeth.

After the initial healing period, changing your jewelry shaft to a shorter length will make the jewelry more comfortable in your mouth. A jewelry change out will also reduce the chances of biting down on the jewelry, or damaging the roof of your mouth or your teeth. The reason the piercing jewelry must be so long is to compensate for swelling.

Tips for Other Piercings...

Sea Salt Soaks

First: fill a fresh disposable cup with 1 cup of warm water, and add 1/4 teaspoon non-iodized sea salt, stirring until the salt is dissolved.

Second: Place the cup over the piercing and form a vacuum seal, or dip the piercing into the cup. (Example: a navel piercing requires a vacuum, while an ear lobe piercing can be held in the sea salt solution)

Soak your piercing for a minimum of 3-5 minutes, twice a day.

Clear Glycerin Soap

The best way to care for your new piercing is to clean it twice daily. The easiest way to clean your piercing is during a shower. The warm water and steam in the shower helps soften your skin and loosen the crust at the base of your jewelry, making the crust easier to remove. While in the shower, wash your hands thoroughly with clear glycerin or oatmeal soap, and use the later to wash around your piercing. Be careful not to rotate any soap through your healing piercing, as this may irritate the wound. **DO NOT use antibacterial soap, or any soap containing color, fragrance, or animal products on your piercing.**

Gently remove the crust from your jewelry with a paper towel or gauze pad if you can't get it off using your fingers.

Additional Tips

Ibuprofen: An over the counter anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen can help reduce pain and swelling in any new piercing.

Never touch your piercing without first washing your hands.

Do not use petroleum based ointments, hydrogen peroxide, rubbing alcohol, or any over the counter aids that contain these ingredients. These substances were not specifically formulated to aid healing, and using them may slow the healing process significantly.

Check the jewelry to make sure the screw-on ends remain tightened. You should make it habit to do this each time you clean your piercing, and before you go to bed at night. Make sure you wash your hands before touching your jewelry! Remember: tighten all threaded accessories by turning them to the right- righty, tighty!

During the entire healing period, you should not change out your jewelry, or remove it for any length of time. The jewelry acts as a drain for the wound created by the piercing needle. Removing your jewelry prematurely can cause an irritated piercing to close up, trapping draining fluid, and leading to complications requiring a medical professional.

Do not over clean your piercing. Cleaning more than twice a day (unless its absolutely necessary) can irritate your piercing, and prolong the healing process. If your piercing appears clean but is noticeably tender, reduce your cleaning regimen to only once a day. As you progress through the healing process, you will develop a successful and permanent cleaning routine.

Do not engage in rough activity that may threaten your piercing. Intense friction and pulling on a fresh piercing is a common way to trigger migration, a process through which the body pushes the jewelry out of the body.

Do not expose your new piercing to anyone else's body fluids. Use protective barriers such as condoms, dental dams, and finger cots, even if you are in a monogamous relationship. For oral piercings, please remember: you have a wound in your mouth. Treat it gently, and don't exchange body fluids!

Do not expose your new piercing to cosmetics such as make-up, hair styling products, lotions, etc. Cosmetics contain many different ingredients and can cause intense irritation to a new piercing. If you need a moisturizer, choose one that does not contain petroleum products, or animal products. Look for the term "vegan" on the label.

Try not to sleep on your new piercing. This causes irritation and will prolong the healing process. For oral piercings and eyebrow piercings, sleep with your head propped up above the level of your body. This is a common way to prevent excessive swelling.

Wash your sheets, blankets, and pillowcases regularly throughout the healing process.

Avoid going into a pool, hot tub, lake, etc. for at least 4 weeks. These bodies of water can be full of bacteria and chemicals and may cause intense irritation.

Do drink plenty of fluids throughout the healing stage.

Approximate Healing Times*

Cartilage: 2 months - 1 year
Earlobe: 6-8 weeks
Eyebrow: 6-8 weeks
Genitals: 4 weeks - 6 months
Labret: 6-8 weeks
Lip: 6-8 weeks
Navel: 6 months to 1 year or more
Nipple: 2-6 months
Nostril: 2 months - 1 year
Septum: 6-8 weeks
Tongue: 4-6 weeks or more

*Please keep in mind that these approximate healing times are only estimates, and should be regarded as approximate. The unique healing power of each body may shorten or lengthen any healing process.

If you think your piercing may be infected, contact a medical professional immediately. Signs of infection may include one or all of the following: green drainage, your piercing feels hot, your piercing hurts worse than it did when you got it pierced.

Remember not to change your jewelry until your piercing is healed. If you have questions, check with your piercer.