

ORAL PIERCING

Risk factors Be a smart consumer
Follow up care



Oral Piercing

Oral piercing may be trendy, but it can pose some health problems such as:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Infections
- Injury to gums, teeth and tongue

Oral piercing involves inserting studs or rings in the tongue, uvula (the soft tissue hanging at the back of the mouth), lips, cheeks or a combination of sites.

Local anaesthetic (freezing) is generally not used.



Never pierce yourself or let a friend do it. It isn't worth the risk.

If you are considering oral piercing, know the risks

Tooth fracture - oral jewellery may damage teeth or fillings; fractures can be severe enough to damage the nerve of the tooth.

Infection - swelling and a pale yellowish discharge around the piercing site.

Potential for disease transmission - such as Hepatitis, HIV, herpes, if proper sterilization methods are not used.

Allergic reactions - to nickel or other alloys used in the metals. All oral jewellery should be made of inert non-toxic metals such as stainless steel, 14K gold, niobium or titanium.

Actions - you could accidentally swallow the oral jewellery if it comes apart.

Speech problems - your speech may be affected and only become normal again if oral jewellery is removed.

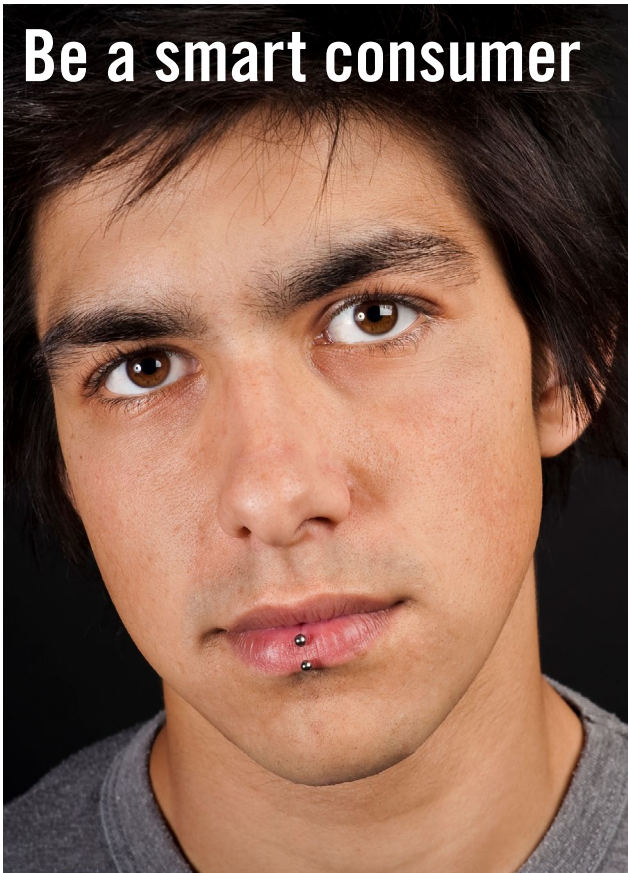
Drooling - increased saliva flow.

Other - constant irritation to gum tissue and damage to veins and nerves resulting in permanent loss of taste, sensation and limited tongue movement.

Certain health problems (epilepsy, valve replacement, weakened immune system) or medications (blood thinners) should also be taken into account, because piercing may cause negative reactions.

If you are aware of all the risks and complications from oral piercing but still decide to have it done, then...

Be a smart consumer



Talk to a health care professional (dentist, physician, nurse) before making your decision.

An establishment should not pierce on the first visit.

A reputable piercer will not pierce adolescents (under 18 years of age) without parental consent.

Ask if the piercing establishment provides written and verbal instructions on before and after care.

Does the studio seem clean? Ask about their sterilization practices.

Make sure the piercer wears clean gloves.



Follow up care

During the first six weeks:

Try not to talk too much for a few days after piercing

Sucking on ice chips may help reduce swelling

Carefully brush with a new, soft-bristled toothbrush and rinse with warm salt water, or an alcohol-free, antibacterial mouthwash

Avoid smoking, alcoholic beverages and spicy foods

Eating soft foods for the first couple of days may help with healing.
See a dentist or doctor if you get an infection

After care

Continue to practice good oral hygiene

Watch for chronic irritation or poor healing

Remove oral jewellery and clean it well (wash your hands before removing oral jewellery)

You may wish to remove oral jewellery during contact sports to prevent mouth injury and possible choking

A night guard may be necessary to protect the teeth

To speak with the York Region Public Health Dental Program, call 1-800-735-6625 or visit york.ca/dental for more information.

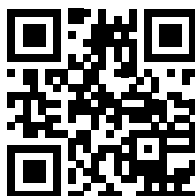
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