

# Care Instructions for your new piercing

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*Piercer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Jewelry: \_\_\_\_\_*

# Aftercare for New Piercings

## Cleaning Instructions

Body piercings need to be cleaned once or twice daily, every day, for the entire initial healing period. Most individuals clean morning and evening, in the shower.

Do not clean more than twice a day with your liquid soap as this will irritate your new piercing and possibly delay your healing process.

### **WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY PRIOR TO HANDLING YOUR PIERCING**

Most people fail to recognize that handwashing is the single most important step in preventing infection. Proper handwashing techniques involve removing rings from fingers and watch from wrist. Use hot running water, a mild liquid or bar soap, then scrub thoroughly in between the webs of your fingers and up along wrist area to remove transient bacteria. Rinse thoroughly. Pat dry. **Failure to properly wash your hands is the leading cause of infections in new piercings.**

- Prepare the area for cleaning by rinsing or soaking your piercing with warm water to remove any stubborn crust. Use a cotton swab. **NEVER** pick with fingernails.
- Apply a small amount of KY jelly to the area with your clean hands. Gently rotate jewelry back and forth to saturate the inside of the piercing with the jelly. You do not need to rotate your jewelry during the first several cleanings if this causes irritation.
- Rinse the area thoroughly under running water while rotating the jewelry to completely remove jelly. Failure to remove cleaning solution can result in irritations.
- Pat dry using disposable paper products. Yes, bacteria is harbored in cloth towels. Remember, you have a portal of entry for bacteria — don't invite them in!
- Leave your new piercing alone after cleaning. It is not necessary or advisable to rotate the jewelry unless you are cleaning it. You are not always able to wash your hands during the course of your day to prevent infection — **LEAVE IT ALONE!**
- The starter jewelry must be left in during the initial healing process. In the event that your piercing becomes infected (**DID YOU WASH YOUR HANDS??**) leave the jewelry in to allow drainage of pus. If the jewelry is removed, the hole will close, resulting in an abscess.
- Do not expose your new piercing to swimming pools, hot tubs, ocean/pond water or beach sand. It is advisable to wait for several weeks before engaging in water activities.

Please try to be patient with your healing process. Each person is unique and healing times can vary greatly from person to person. If you think you are having a problem — **CALL US!**

(410) 768-6471

# Aftercare for Oral Piercings

## Cleaning Instructions

- ☑ Rinse mouth for 30—60 seconds with mouthwash after meals during the entire minimum initial healing period. Use no more than 4 to 6 times daily. It is advisable to floss teeth to remove food particles, brush away, then rinse with mouthwash.
- ☑ Rinse mouth briefly (10—15 seconds) with mild \*sea salt mixture after anything that goes into your mouth with the exception of water or ice. This includes rinsing after smoking, snacking, coffee/tea/soda beverages.

\*Sea Salt Mixture: use 1/4 teaspoon non-iodized (iodine free) sea salt to one cup (8 oz.) warm water. Avoid hot water for the first few days.  
You can purchase sea salt at most grocery stores.

## What is normal?

- ☑ Swelling of the area is perfectly normal during the healing of an oral piercing. It can be greatly reduced by sucking (not chewing) on clean ice. Chipped or shaved ice is the best. The majority of swelling usually lasts for 3—5 days. Don't panic!
- ☑ Any new piercing can bleed on and off for the first few days. There can also be some bleeding under the surface resulting in temporary bruising or discoloration. This is perfectly normal and not indicative of any complication.
- ☑ Tenderness or discomfort is not unusual. You may feel aching, pinching, tightness or other unpleasant sensations off and on for several days.
- ☑ Do not become alarmed if you see a liquid, yellowish secretion coming from the piercing. This is blood plasma and dead cells. All piercings secrete. It just looks different inside the mouth since it doesn't have a chance to dry and form a crust as it does on ear or body piercings. This is not pus, just an indication of the healing process!!

## What to avoid...

- ☑ No oral sexual contact including French (wet) kissing during the initial healing period. If you had a large cut, you would not want someone spitting into it, would you? This is essentially the same thing.
- ☑ Avoid chewing gum, tobacco, fingernails, pencils or anything else that doesn't belong in your mouth, except food. Don't share plates, cups or eating utensils.

- ☑ Reduction of smoking is advisable when healing an oral piercing. Smoking increases risks and can lengthen the healing time.
- ☑ Stay away from aspirin, large amounts of caffeine and alcoholic beverages for the first few days and avoid spicy, salty or acidic foods. These can cause additional swelling, bleeding and discomfort.
- ☑ Do not “play” with your new piercing during the healing period. The mouth withstands trauma from normal eating and speaking movements, but playing with the jewelry by clicking against your teeth causes undue stress and may cause the formation of scar tissue, migration of the jewelry or other complications. Even after healing, excessive play with oral jewelry can result in permanent damage to teeth, gums, or other oral structures. Metal is hard — be gentle!

### **Oral Piercing Hints and Tips**

- ☑ Swelling? Try sleeping on extra pillows during the first few nights. Keeping your head above your heart will help avoid much initial overnight swelling.
- ☑ Pain? Anti-inflammatories such as Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) can reduce discomfort and diminish swelling.
- ☑ Problems eating? Take small bites, go slowly, drink plenty of cold water. Ice cream, jello and other cold foods feel great. Just remember to rinse, floss and brush after eating!
- ☑ Worried about swallowing your jewelry? Check **twice daily with clean hands** to make sure the threaded ends of stainless or acrylic balls are secure. Be gentle when checking as you don't want to break the threads loose from inside the ball. If you do swallow your jewelry — don't panic, it will come out in the “end” in a day or two! Flush it, don't attempt retrieve it (yes, some people have tried this...)
- ☑ Didn't check for tightness and lost a ball? Carry a spare one with you in your wallet or purse. If you break a ball and don't have an extra, a small piece of **clean** eraser from a pencil will do the trick until it can be replaced. Please do not remove your jewelry, stop in and we will replace it. Replacement fees for jewelry varies with size & gauge.
- ☑ After your piercing is healed and you replace the balls with different styles, remember to close your sink with a stopper to avoid the ball going down your drain.

**Every precaution has been taken to protect you from infections, but we cannot protect you from yourself once you leave our environment.**

**WASH YOUR HANDS!**

**USE COMMON SENSE!**

**FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS FAITHFULLY!**

***LET'S "INTERDIGITATE"***  
*(a fancy, \$10.00 word for handwashing!)*

Although our competent professionals verbally relate care instructions and have handed you this copy of written care instructions, we ask you to take a moment and review the following information for your continued health, safety and expansion of knowledge.

*Over 1 trillion microbes set up housekeeping on our bodies, most of which are not harmful to our personal beings. However, staph and other microbes can cause disease. Handwashing is the single most important step in controlling, removing, or eliminating infectious organisms. Sounds pretty simple, doesn't it? A quick shove under the faucet, slosh a little soap, and voila! Unfortunately, that type of "wash" doesn't remove bacteria, it just gives them a little bath and they go about their business.*

*Proper handwashing requires warm to hot running water, a good scrub brush, soap and paper products. Below are important points to remember and adopt as part of your daily routine. Remember, most infections are caused (and spread) by not washing your hands!*

**PROPER HANDWASHING TECHNIQUES**

-  **Remove all rings, bracelets, and wristwatches prior to turning on faucets. Microbes love warm, moist environments and these items offer refuge!**
-  **Set temperature toward warm, or as hot as can be reasonably tolerated.**
-  **Apply liquid or bar soap in the palms and begin with a circular motion moving toward the fingers and in between the webbing of fingers.**
-  **Take special care around the cuticles and fingernails as there are 1—10 million organisms that colonize in this area.**
-  **The wrist area is equally important and often overlooked. Scrub upwards toward elbows.**
-  **The backs of your hands contain microbes too — most individuals forget this important area. Scrub it!**
-  **Friction is important. The physical act of rubbing your hands together removes resident and transient bacteria.**
-  **Rinse well. Repeat the process. This should take a 2—3 minutes of your time.**
-  **Dry hands thoroughly with paper products. Cloth towels harbor bacteria. Damp hands encourage microbial growth.**
-  **Use a paper towel to turn the faucet off ~ this is frequently overlooked ~ and you don't want to re-contaminate your hands by forgetting this step.**