

APROXIMATE HEALING TIMES

Cheek: 2- 3 months
Cartilage: 2 months – 1 year
Earlobe: 6- 8 weeks
Genitals 4 weeks – 6 months
Labret: 6- 8 weeks
Lip: 6- 8 weeks
Navel: 6 months – 1 year
Nipple: 2- 6 months
Nostril: 2 months- 1 year
Septum: 6- 8 weeks
Tongue: 4- 6 weeks

Suggested Healing & Aftercare Guidelines

Primary Oral Suggestion

Oral Rinse The optimal way to care for your piercing is to rinse your mouth for 30- 60 seconds with a medical- grade oral rinse, such as tech 2000 or Bio- tene, after every meal during the initial healing period (3- 6 weeks). If a medical grade oral rinse is not available, the next best thing is to dilute 4 oz. of an oral antiseptic with 4oz. of water. (50/ 50) this will de- intensify the antiseptic and prevent it from irritating your piercing (Note: Do not use plain mouthwash. It will do nothing for your piercing- it will only mask your halitosis. Do not listen to those who tell you to rinse more often, be careful not to over- clean your piercing, as this will prevent normal healing. (Signs of over- cleaning include a very white or yellowish tongue.) It is also normal to see a discharge, as with any piercing only in your mouth it can't become hard and crusty. Brushing your tongue will reduce any plaque build up on your jewelry.

Sea Salt Rinses In addition to the oral rinse, after every meal, sea salt will also help your piercing. First, fill a small, Fresh disposable cup with adequate warm water and add ¼ tablespoon of sea salt, stirring until it is completely dissolved. Then rinse your mouth approximately 15 seconds. Sea salt rinses should be performed after meals. Note: Some piercers have had much success by substituting sea salt rinses for medical grade oral rinses.

Ice Ice and other cold liquids can reduce swelling. Ice pops, ice cream, and frozen yogurt, are also good ways to reduce swelling, but be sure to perform either a sea salt or oral rinse following your snack (this is not necessary if you use just plain ice). Swelling tends to last 3- 5 days. And up to 7 days in some instances.

Ibuprofen For those who are extremely sensitive, an over the counter anti- inflammatory such as Ibuprofen (Motrin IB, Advil, etc.) can help reduce swelling and pain. Tylenol and other products containing acetaminophen will do nothing to reduce your swelling.

Brush your teeth It is important to brush your teeth at least twice daily while your piercing is healing. Brushing your teeth after meals will cut down on the amount of bacteria and food particles in your mouth. It is suggested that you purchase a new soft- bristle tooth brush to use during the initial healing period. 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 build up.

Primary Non- Oral Suggestion

Anti- bacterial soap The optimal way to care for your piercing is to clean it twice daily (if you're physically active, try to schedule your cleanings after your exercise). The easiest and most comfortable way to clean your piercing is with showering or immediately following a hot shower. The hot water and steam will help soften your skin and any crusty build up. While in the shower, wash your hands thoroughly with a light anti- bacterial soap. Preferably a medical grade soap such as Povidone or Satin. (Beware: anti- bacterial soaps containing fragrances can irritate your piercing or cause allergic reactions.) Next gently remove any crust from your jewelry with a disposable one- time- use product such as a cotton ball, tissue, swab or square. (Do not use a hand towel as bacteria can lie dormant in the cloth.) Then place some antibacterial soap in your hands and rub them together to create a nice lather. Gently wipe the jewelry and your piercing with the tips of your fingers, being careful not to scratch or irritate the area. Once the jewelry and the piercing are lathered with soap rotate the jewelry so that the ball rests on the hole of your piercing, then rotate the jewelry until the ball rests on the opposite hole. This process will help run some soap into the wound, helping to ward off bacteria. After spinning the jewelry back and forth several times, rinse the area and the jewelry thoroughly while continuing to spin the jewelry back and forth. (Tip: Do not place your piercing directly into the stream of water. Instead, try to redirect the stream of water with your hands in order to reduce the intensity of rinsing.) If your starter jewelry is not a captive bead ring or circular barbell, try your best to perform the above process without irritating or overworking the area.

Sea salt soaks Sometime prior to completing the above process, you can perform your sea- salt soaks either in or out of the shower. First, fill a fresh disposable cup with water and add a pinch of sea- salt, stirring until it is completely dissolved. When ready, either place the cup over piercing, forming a vacuum- type seal or dip the piercing into the cup. If either of these techniques are not possible, you may mix a solution of sea- salt water in a bowl and dip a fresh cotton ball, tissue or swab then press firmly against the piercing. In order to

promote effectiveness, the initial soak should last 3- 5 minutes. All additional soaks should last from 1- 3 minutes at least. Following the soak, pat your piercing dry with another fresh disposable product.

Ibuprofen For those who are extremely sensitive, an over the counter anti- inflammatory such as Ibuprofen (Motrin IB, Advil, etc.) can help reduce swelling and pain. Tylenol and other products containing acetaminophen will do nothing to reduce your swelling.

Additional Tips

According to the piercing- friendly physician Dr. Janet L. H. Keating with the Duke University Health Service, one of the vast ways to care for and heal a piercing is to “promote healthy lifestyle habits.” Some additional tips for this include:

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 healing process for any wound includes a secretion of a white- yellowish fluid (containing white blood cells and plasma). This fluid will dry and form a crust on your jewelry. To properly remove this crust refer to the primary suggestions for healing a piercing.

Never touch your piercing without first washing your hands with an anti- bacterial soap. This is a great way to avoid infection even after your piercing is healed.

Do not use a petroleum- base ointments (eg. Neosporin, Bacracin, etc..) Peroxide, Alcohol, Betadine, Iodine and Hibaclense.

These products can hinder and prolong the healing process, causing irritation and possible infection.

Check the accessories (e. g., balls, gem ends, dice, etc.) on your jewelry for tightness at least once a day. Remember, always do this with clean hands. Checking your accessories is something that you should make habitual throughout the life of your piercing. Remember: Tighten all threaded jewelry by turning them to the right- righty, tighty.

During the entire healing period, the jewelry should remain in place to act as a drain. If the jewelry is too large to allow adequate drainage, it can be replaced with a smaller size by a piercing professional.

Removing your jewelry prematurely can cause an infected hole to close up, trapping an infection and leading to complications requiring a medical professional. If you feel the normal secretion is turning into a darker and thicker discharge, please do not hesitate to contact your piercer or physician for advice.

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

Do not expose your piercing to oral contact, or other body fluids. Use protective barriers such as condoms, dental dams and finger cots- even if you are in a monogamous relationship.

Oral: Remember, during the healing process you have an open wound in your mouth- so treat it as such!

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

Oral: Try to refrain from eating hard candy, chewing gum, chewing tobacco, biting your nails or giving in to any other oral fixation you may have. Any of these activities can increase the chances for infection and may prolong the healing process.

Oral: Following the initial healing period, changing your post to a shorter length will make the jewelry more comfortable in your mouth. This will also reduce the chances of biting down on the jewelry and having the jewelry irritate the roof of your mouth or the lower gums. The reason the initial post must be so long is to accommodate for the swelling. There are many sizes available, so find one that fits you!

Do not expose your piercing to cosmetics such as make- up of hair styling products, lotions etc. Cosmetics contain many different ingredients and can primarily cause irritation and sometimes infection.

Eat nutrient- dense meals throughout the day and consider supplementing the diet with Vitamin C (300mg in mineral ascorbate form) and Zinc (120mg for males and 60mg for females). These supplements are most effective during the first two weeks of the healing process. If you are very active (e. g., work hard, partake in regular exercise, etc.) extra nutrient- dense meals and an additional multivitamin supplement may help keep your immune system efficient.

Drink plenty of fluids 8- 10 glasses of bottled water or purified water is a good way to keep your body hydrated.

Try to get plenty of sleep, 9 hours of sleep a night. This is considered the optimal amount of sleep for the body. This will help your body heal as best as possible. If you are living in a high stress environment, consider resting as much as you can in your down time.

Try not to sleep on your new piercing This causes irritation and may prolong the healing process. Oral: Also try to prop your head above your heart while sleeping. This is a common way to prevent excessive swelling... or drooling..

Replace your bedding with a clean set of sheets, blankets, pillow- cases during as much as possible during the healing period.

Do not leave jewelry out of a piercing for too long! If you must remove your jewelry, either put in a retainer or replace it as ASAP. For example, a tongue piercing can close in a matter of hours. Remember, everyone is different you don’t know what your body will do versus someone else’s experience.

Avoid bodies of water, (lakes, rivers, oceans, etc.) while healing a chlorinated pool or hot tub you know is kept clean is okay, just be sure to clean your piercing shortly thereafter..

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