

# Caring for Your New Piercing

## General Care

- **Be sure your hands are clean** before you touch your piercing.
- **Either: spritz your piercing** with the provided sea salt spray 6 to 10 times a day, or...
- **Soak the piercing with warm saline solution** for 5 minutes to soften any normal dried secretions. Make a saline solution of 1 cup warm water mixed with 1/4 teaspoon of non-iodized sea salt. Measure salt carefully. Too much salt can irritate the piercing.
- **Clean the piercing** with a mild antimicrobial soap twice a day during the entire healing period. Rinse with water.
- **Rotate the jewelry** a few times during cleansing and rinsing.
- **Dry the piercing** with paper products. Cloth towels can harbor bacteria.
- **Don't use alcohol or hydrogen peroxide** to clean the piercing. These products are too harsh and inhibit new cell growth.
- **Don't use antibacterial ointments.** They are difficult to clean out of a piercing and may trap bacteria once the antibacterial action wears off.
- **To help healing,** soak a piercing with saline solution once or twice a day.
- **Listen to your body** when exercising or engaging in sexual activity. If it hurts, don't do it!

## Tongue, Lip and Cheek Piercings

- **Rinse for 60 seconds** with an alcohol-free antimicrobial mouth rinse of either a saline solution, Biotene® Oral Rinse, or 50% Listerine® Antiseptic Mouthwash. Do this up to 5 times a day, spaced throughout the day.
- **Rinse your mouth briefly** (30-60 seconds) with saline solution up to twice daily between meals. Brush your teeth, tongue, and jewelry with a new, soft-bristle toothbrush. Use a new toothbrush every month.
- **Avoid oral sexual contact** for 4-6 weeks, including French kissing, even if you are in a monogamous relationship.

## Tips for Healing

- **For ear piercings,** be sure to disinfect your phone.
- **For body piercings,** change your sheets and pillowcases weekly.
- **For genital piercings,** use condoms and dental dams when having sex, even if you are in a monogamous relationship.
- **Condoms** can and should be worn over male genital piercings.
- **Use common sense.** If you are thinking about enjoying a bath, hot tub, or swimming in a pool, lake, or ocean, remember that you have an open wound. You may need to pass up the activity or clean your piercing immediately afterwards.

## While You're Healing

For a piercing to heal well, you must clean it consistently. Piercings may be red and irritated at times during the healing period. Some blood and discharge are normal.

If infection occurs, think carefully before you remove the jewelry.

When jewelry is removed, a new body piercing closes very quickly—within hours or days—and may seal an infection in your body. Leaving jewelry in the piercing promotes drainage and reduces complications such as an abscess.

If you suspect an infection, consult your health care provider.

## Healing Times for Piercings

**Earlobes:** 4-6 weeks

**Ear cartilage:** 2 months to 1 year

**Tongue:** 4-6 weeks

**Eyebrow:** 6-8 weeks

**Nostril:** 2-3 months

**Lip and lip area:** 6-8 weeks

**Cheek:** 2-3 months

**Nipple:** 2-6 months

**Navel:** 6 months to 1 year

**Most female genitalia:** 4-8 weeks

**Most male genitalia:** 3-6 months

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## Things to Watch Out For

**Body piercing carries potential risks. Be aware of the possibility of:**

- **Irritations.** Cleaning solutions, clothing, sex, and/or trauma to the piercing may cause irritations. You may need to change how you are treating your piercing.
- **Infections.** Cleaning your piercing correctly, and keeping dirty hands and other people's body fluids away from the site is important to avoiding an infection.
- **Keloids.** If you are prone to keloids (a tough scar tissue) piercing may not be a good choice of body art for you.
- **Chipped teeth or enamel and gum erosion.** Tongue and lip piercings increase the risk of these. Plastic beads and shorter bar posts may reduce the risks with a tongue piercing.

**Once you leave the studio, your piercing is your responsibility.** Please take care of it as we have directed.

If you have any problems or question, please contact us.

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