

ORAL PIERCING AFTERCARE

CLEANING SOLUTIONS

- Antimicrobial or antibacterial alcohol-free mouth rinse.
- Plain clean water.
- Packaged sterile saline with **.09% sodium chloride as the only ingredient** is a gentle choice for piercing aftercare.
- Sea salt mixture homemade: Dissolve 1/4 teaspoon of iodine-free sea salt into one cup (8 oz) of warm distilled or bottled water. A stronger mixture is NOT better; a saline solution that is too strong can irritate the piercing.

CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS FOR INSIDE THE MOUTH

- Rinse mouth as needed (4-5 times) daily with a cleaning solution for 30-60 seconds. Do this in the morning, after meals, and at bedtime during the entire healing period.
- Do not over-clean. When you over clean, it may cause discoloration or irritation of your mouth and piercing.

CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EXTERIOR OF LABRET (CHEEK & LIP) PIERCINGS

- **Wash** your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning or touching your piercing for any reason.
- **Saline rinse** as needed during healing. For certain placements it may be easier to apply using clean gauze saturated with saline solution. A brief rinse afterward will remove any residue.
- If using soap, gently lather around the piercing and rinse as needed. Avoid using harsh soaps, or soaps with dyes, fragrances, or triclosan.
- **Rinse** thoroughly to remove all traces of the soap from the piercing. It is not necessary to rotate the jewelry through the piercing.
- **Dry** by gently patting with a clean or disposable towel.

HOW TO HELP REDUCE SWELLING

- Allow small pieces of ice to dissolve in the mouth.
- Take an over-the-counter NSAID such as ibuprofen or naproxen sodium according to package instructions.
- Don't speak or move your jewelry more than necessary.
- Sleep with your head elevated above your heart during the first few nights.

WHAT IS NORMAL?

- **For the first three to five days:** significant swelling, light bleeding, bruising, and/or tenderness.
- **After that:** Some swelling, light secretion of a whitish yellow fluid.
- **Be patient and keep cleaning throughout the entire healing period.** A piercing may seem healed before the healing process is complete. This is because they heal from the outside in, and although it feels fine, the tissue remains fragile on the inside.
- Even healed piercings can shrink or close in minutes after having been there for years! This varies from person to person; if you like your piercing, keep jewelry in.

TO MAINTAIN GOOD ORAL HYGIENE

- Use a new soft-bristled toothbrush and store it in a clean area away from other toothbrushes.
- Brush your teeth and use your chosen rinse (saline or mouthwash) after every meal.
- During healing floss daily, and gently brush your teeth, tongue and jewelry. Once healed, brush the jewelry more thoroughly to avoid plaque build-up.
- The healthier your lifestyle, the easier it will be for your piercing to heal.

EATING

- Slowly eat small bites of food.
- Avoid eating spicy, salty, acidic, or hot temperature foods or beverages for a few days.
- Cold foods and beverages are soothing and help reduce swelling.
- Foods like mashed potatoes and oatmeal are hard to eat because they stick to your jewelry.
- For tongue piercing, try to keep your tongue level in your mouth as you eat because the jewelry can get between your teeth when your tongue turns.
- For labret (cheek and lip) piercings, be cautious about opening your mouth too wide as this can result in the jewelry catching on your teeth.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Do not play with your jewelry. This can cause permanent damage to teeth and gums.
- Avoid undue trauma; excessive talking or playing with the jewelry during healing can cause the formation of scar tissue, migration, and other complications.
- Avoid using mouthwash containing alcohol. It can irritate the piercing and delay healing.
- Avoid oral sexual contact including French kissing or oral sex during healing.
- Avoid chewing gum, tobacco, fingernails, pencils, sunglasses, etc.
- Avoid sharing plates, cups, and eating utensils.
- Avoid smoking! It increases risks and lengthens healing time.
- Avoid aspirin, alcohol, and excessive caffeine while you are experiencing bleeding or swelling.
- Avoid submerging healing piercings in bodies of water such as lakes, pools, etc.