



To Pierce Or Not To Pierce

The straight talk on getting or having your tongue pierced....

Have you ever thought about chipped teeth, drooling, gum damage, nerve damage, taste loss, tooth loss or infection? These are just some of the problems that can arise from getting and having a pierced tongue according to many of the nation's dentists.

Fractured teeth are a common problem. People chip teeth on tongue piercings while eating, sleeping, talking and chewing on the jewelry. The fracture can be confined to the tooth enamel and just require a filling or it may go deeper causing you to either have a need for a root canal or the tooth removed.

Every time you swallow, the barbell hits the teeth, causing a constant irritation. It can cause ulcers to form, which in turn, if you're a smoker can become cancerous.

Infections can happen because the tongue is covered with bacteria. The moment the tongue is punctured, bacteria are introduced into the blood. When this happens the bacteria can reach the heart and cause a serious infection landing a person in the hospital.

Home Care: If you decide to pierce your tongue or you already have a tongue piercing you must take care of it. Once the tongue is pierced it can take up to 3-4 weeks to heal. Unless there are complications, the jewelry can be removed for short periods of time without the hole closing.

- ☺ Clean the piercing with an antiseptic mouthwash after every meal.
- ☺ Brush the tongue jewelry the same as you would brush your teeth, to remove the plaque that can gather on it.

Hey, there's more on the other side.....

Did you know?....The longer the piercing is worn the weaker the lower front teeth can become. If they become very weak, they can loosen up and eventually need to be removed. This will leave you with a space in the front of your mouth and a not so attractive smile.

So you still want to do it, huh?

- ☺ *If you still decide to have the piercing, to avoid a serious or deadly infection such as HIV or Hepatitis, make sure the equipment and instruments used are sterilized in an autoclave machine. Ask the piercer about after care, cleanliness, equipment and other concerns.*

What if I have a problem?.....

1. *What do I do if my tongue gets very swollen and hurts for more than a few days?*
 - ☺ *Remove the tongue ring, AND*
 - ☺ *See a dentist as soon as possible!*
2. *What do I do if my tooth chips?*
 - ☺ *Remove the tongue ring, AND*
 - ☺ *See a dentist as soon as possible!*

(If you wait you may end up losing the tooth)

***It's your mouth.....be Safe, Secure And Smart !!!
well Smiles 4ever...***

*This information is offered to you by the
Oral Health Services Prog. of the
Baltimore City Health Department
For more information on clinic locations & services
call 410-396-4501*



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