

ORAL PIERCING

Risk factors

Be a smart consumer

Follow-up care



Oral Piercing

Oral piercing may be trendy, but it can pose some health problems such as:

- Pain
- Swelling
- Infections
- Injury to gums, teeth and tongue

Oral piercing involves inserting studs or rings in the tongue, uvula (the soft tissue hanging at the back of the mouth), lips, cheeks or a combination of sites.

Local anaesthetic (freezing) is generally not used.



Never pierce yourself or let a friend do it. It isn't worth the risk.

If you are considering oral piercing, know the risks

Tooth fracture - oral jewellery may damage teeth or fillings; fractures can be severe enough to damage the nerve of the tooth.

There is a risk of getting an infection during all personal services. The risk is especially high for invasive services such as oral piercings where skin is intentionally broken.

Signs of infection may include swelling and a pale yellowish discharge around the piercing site. Improper reprocessing of piercing devices could result in the transmission of blood borne disease-causing microorganisms, such as hepatitis B virus, hepatitis C virus or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Allergic reactions - to nickel or other alloys used in the metals. All oral jewellery should be made of inert non-toxic metals such as stainless steel, 14K gold, niobium or titanium.

Actions - you could accidentally swallow the oral jewellery if it comes apart.

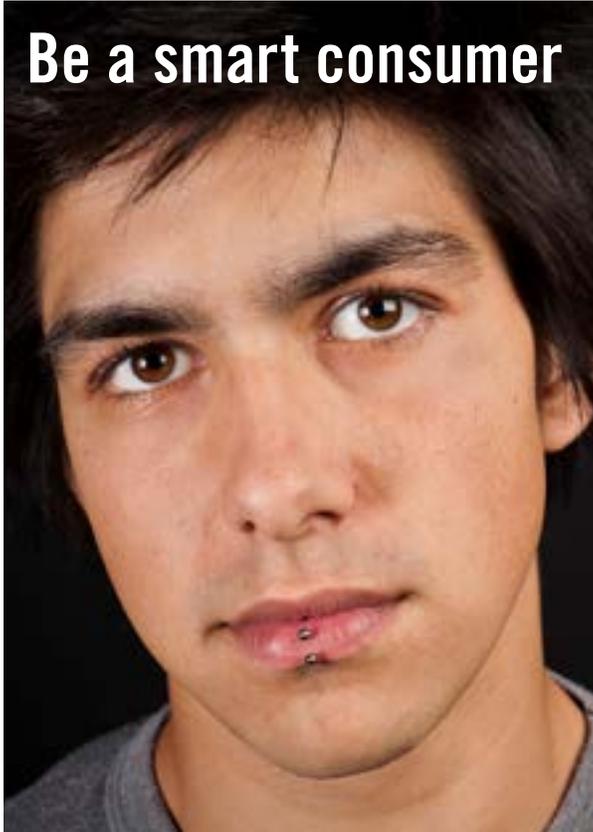
Speech problems - your speech may be affected and only become normal again if oral jewellery is removed.

Drooling - increased saliva flow.

Other - constant irritation to gum tissue and damage to veins and nerves resulting in permanent loss of taste, sensation and limited tongue movement.

Certain health problems (epilepsy, valve replacement, weakened immune system) or medications (blood thinners) should also be taken into account, because piercing may cause negative reactions.

If you are aware of all the risks and complications from oral piercing but still decide to have it done, then...



Be a smart consumer

Check before you go

Before you book an appointment, check that your personal service setting is inspected by Public Health and review the results of their latest inspection report at york.ca/YorkSafe

Talk to a health care professional (dentist, physician, nurse) before making your decision.

An establishment should not pierce on the first visit.

A reputable piercer will not pierce adolescents (under 18 years of age) without parental consent.

Ask if the piercing establishment provides written and verbal instructions on before and after care.

For more information on safe infection and control practices that you should be aware of before your piercing, please visit york.ca/BeSpaSafe and Body Piercing



Follow-up care

During the first six weeks:

- Try not to talk too much for a few days after piercing
- Sucking on ice chips may help reduce swelling
- Carefully brush with a new, soft-bristled toothbrush and rinse with warm salt water, or an alcohol-free, antibacterial mouthwash
- Avoid smoking, alcoholic beverages and spicy foods
- Eating soft foods for the first couple of days may help with healing. See a dentist or doctor if you get an infection

After care

- Continue to practice good oral hygiene
- Watch for chronic irritation or poor healing
- Remove oral jewellery and clean it well (wash your hands before removing oral jewellery)
- You may wish to remove oral jewellery during contact sports to prevent mouth injury and possible choking
- A night guard may be necessary to protect the teeth

To speak with the York Region Public Health Dental Program, call 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74388 or visit york.ca/dental for more information.

PUBLIC HEALTH
1-800-361-5653
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york.ca/dental



York Region