



Piercing Aftercare: Oral

Draft. Not yet approved by the studio's qualified practitioner. Do not issue to clients.

This guide covers piercings of the tongue, lip, cheek and inside the mouth. The mouth heals quickly but carries a lot of bacteria, so cleaning and care matter. Healing usually takes several weeks to a few months, depending on the piercing. Your piercer will give you an estimate.

The first few days

- Swelling is expected. A tongue piercing can swell a lot in the first few days. This is normal.
- Keep your head raised when you sleep for the first few nights.
- Let ice or very cold water melt slowly in your mouth to ease swelling.
- Eat soft, cool or lukewarm foods. Avoid hot drinks, spicy food and very hard or crunchy food while it is tender.

Cleaning

- Rinse your mouth gently after eating, after drinking anything other than water and before bed. Use sterile saline or an alcohol-free mouthwash as your piercer advised.
- Brush your teeth as normal, gently around the jewellery. Use a new, soft toothbrush.
- On the outside of a lip piercing, clean with sterile saline wound wash from a sealed can or sachet and pat dry with clean paper towel.
- Wash your hands before touching the piercing, and touch it as little as possible.

Avoid while healing

- Smoking and vaping. They slow healing and increase the risk of problems.
- Alcohol and alcohol-based mouthwash.
- Kissing and oral contact with another person, and sharing cutlery, cups or toothbrushes.
- Playing with the jewellery. Biting or clicking it against your teeth can chip teeth and damage gums.
- Chewing gum, pen tops, fingernails and anything else that goes in your mouth.

Downsizing and long-term care

Initial jewellery is longer to allow for swelling. Book a downsize check with your piercer once the swelling has settled, so the jewellery does not rub your teeth or gums. Keep seeing your dentist and tell them about your piercing. Take jewellery out or use a guard for contact sport, as your piercer advises. Check the ball ends stay tight.

Important: Call 999 or go to A&E if you have difficulty breathing or swallowing, or if your tongue or lips swell so much that your airway feels affected. Contact your GP or NHS 111 for spreading redness,



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increasing pain, heat, pus, a bad taste that will not go, fever or feeling unwell. Do not remove jewellery for a suspected infection unless a clinician tells you to.

What is normal

Swelling, tenderness, a pale or yellow-white coating around the piercing and a little bleeding in the first days are normal. A slight lisp usually settles as the swelling goes down.

Practitioner to confirm: the healing times quoted for each oral piercing, whether the studio advises saline or an alcohol-free mouthwash (or both), when the studio recommends the first downsize, and the advice on contact sport and X-rays.

Questions? Email thedesk@rebelliousink.tattoo. For anything medical, contact NHS 111 or your GP. In an emergency, call 999.