

Congratulations on your new piercing!

In this pamphlet, we will outline basic aftercare, what to expect, and some things to avoid in order to give you the best chance at healing your piercing successfully.

If at any point you experience any signs of infection (sudden onset of excessive swelling, fever, green or brown foul smelling discharge), seek medical attention immediately. Most issues are not infection related, so feel free to contact us at any time if you have questions.

If you wish to donate blood/plasma you must wait the standard deferral period and provide a copy of your release form.

Now, let's get right into it!

What to Expect

Immediately following receiving the piercing you may experience:

- slight swelling
- mild irritation and redness localized to the piercing site
- bleeding (not profuse bleeding, just a little here and there)
- yellowish-white discharge that will dry and accumulate near the entrance and/or exit of the piercing (this can persist on and off for weeks, even months)

Non-Oral Piercings

The discharge will accumulate near the entrance and exit of the piercing. This can occur on and off for weeks to months. As this builds up around the site of the piercing, it should be gently removed. Be sure to visually check both sides of your piercing. It pays to know if there is build-up or swelling, etc.

What to Do

Wet the area with sterile saline Wound Wash and gently clean away discharge with sterile non-woven gauze. Dry completely with gauze. Irrigating the area once a day with hot water in the shower will also aid in the removal of crusty build-up. Clean with sterile saline and gauze after showering and dry completely. **ONLY CLEAN THE PIERCING AS NEEDED!** If there isn't any debris on the jewelry or near the piercing site, it shouldn't require much cleaning.

What to Avoid

- touching the piercing/jewelry with your hands
- twisting, turning, or rotating the jewelry
- excessive moisture: do not soak the piercing or submerge it, and always dry hair completely after showering
- contact with natural bodies of water (lake, river, ocean) and chlorine water (pools, hot tubs)
- contact with other cleaning products such as alcohol, peroxide, Claire's solution, tea tree oil, astringents or self-mixed sea salt solution
- contact with makeup or hair products
- contact with the bodily fluids of others (kissing, sharing utensils or drinks)

Additional Information

It is very important that the piercing remains dry unless you are cleaning it or showering. Dry hair completely after showering and avoid going to bed with wet hair.

Sterile saline Wound Wash can be purchased at our facility or the first aid section of the pharmacy. If purchased elsewhere, make sure you are buying "Wound Wash" and double-check the ingredients. It should only read: "water, sodium chloride."

Again, we are only using the saline and gauze as a safe way to remove debris. The saline will not accelerate healing, kill germs, or fix any problem that may arise.



Oral Piercings

What to Do

Rinse the mouth thoroughly after eating with purified water or saline Wound Wash. A non-alcohol mouthwash may be used (no more than twice a day). We are just trying to gently rinse away food particles after eating. Continue to brush teeth as you normally would. You may consider switching toothpaste to something with minimal ingredients. Always wash your hands before touching your food.

You may use ice chips inside the mouth as needed to help mitigate swelling. Sleeping with the head slightly elevated can also help keep swelling at bay.

What to Avoid

- salty, spicy, overly acidic foods
- touching the piercing/jewelry with your hands
- contact with the bodily fluids of others (kissing, sharing utensils/drinks, etc.)
- contact with alcoholic beverages
- smoking
- drinking thick drinks through straws (smoothies/milkshakes); use a spoon instead

**Piercings that go from the inside of the mouth to the outside of the mouth (lip and cheek piercings) should implement both Oral and Non-Oral healing instructions.*

Things to Consider

Downsizing

Oftentimes, we use jewelry that is a bit long to accommodate for swelling. When swelling subsides, it is important to get a hold of us for shorter jewelry. Downsizing the jewelry will not only help it fit and look better, but it will help reduce the chance of it getting bumped or snagged. Downsizing oral piercings will greatly reduce the chance of biting the jewelry and damaging teeth. Downsizing can be needed anywhere from 3 weeks to 3 months following the initial piercing.

Sleeping

Ear piercings (especially cartilage piercings) can suffer if slept on. U-shaped travel pillows can help you avoid sleeping directly on your piercing. Changing pillow cases more frequently is recommended especially if you have animals.

Nipple piercings can benefit from wearing a clean, fitted cotton shirt as it will reduce the chance of snagging.

Full Healing

It can take months to well over a year to fully heal a piercing. A piercing may look/feel good, but can remain extremely fragile for a long time. Leave your jewelry in! Piercings can shrink/close very quickly when jewelry is removed. Most piercings should be changed by a professional at least until they are fully healed.



Your Piercer

Date

Piercing

Initial Jewelry Size / Style

Approximate Downsize Date

Notes