

## **Oral Piercing**

Oral piercing (usually on the tongue or around the lips) is one of the more disturbing fashion trends in recent years. Many people fail to realize that that even precautions taken during the installation of a piece of piercing jewelry are not enough to stave off harmful, long-term consequences such as cracked or chipped teeth, swelling, problems with swallowing and taste, and ugly scars. Add to this the possibility of choking on a piece of dislodged jewelry and one has to ask if the risks are warranted.

But the most serious long-term health problems from oral piercing come in the form of damage to the soft tissues such as the cheeks, gums and palate, as well as opportunistic infections. Any kind of body piercing may also put you at risk of contracting deadly infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis.

A common form of body piercing involves the tongue. Tongue piercings have been known to cause blocked airways (from a swollen tongue). In some cases, a tongue piercing will cause uncontrolled bleeding.

Some states actually regulate or ban oral piercing, so ensure that you are not breaking any laws.

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