



# The Risks of Oral Piercings

Oral piercings, which involve the tongue, lips, cheeks, uvula and even tongue splitting, can cause adverse oral and systemic side effects, as well as dental damage.

Some common risks of oral piercings include:



## Infection, Pain and Swelling

Millions of bacteria live in your mouth, so oral piercings can easily become infected and painful. If left untreated, an infection from a tongue piercing can be life threatening as it could cause the tongue to swell and block your airway.



## Damage to Gums, Teeth and Fillings

Biting or playing with a piercing can harm your gums and result in cracked, scratched or sensitive teeth. Piercings can also damage fillings.



## Nerve Damage

A tongue piercing can cause temporary or sometimes permanent nerve damage, leaving you with a numb tongue. This affects your sense of taste and movement of your mouth.



## Dental Appointment Difficulties

Oral piercings can get in the way of dental care by making it difficult for a dentist to give you a complete oral examination and can interfere with X-rays.



## Hypersensitivity to Metals

Allergic reactions are possible at the piercing site.



## Blood Loss

Damage to your tongue's blood vessels can cause serious blood loss.



## Excessive Drooling

Your tongue piercing can increase saliva production.



## Bad Breath

With poor oral care, food and debris can collect over and around the piercing. This can lead to bad breath, as well as an altered sense of taste.

## If you already have oral piercings:

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**Watch for signs of infection** and contact your dentist or physician immediately should an infection arise.



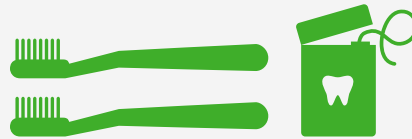
**Keep the pierced area clean** and use mouth rinse after every meal.



**Be gentle and aware** of the piercing's movement when talking and chewing.



When playing sports, remove the piercing and **use a mouthguard.**



Visit your dentist regularly, **brush two times a day** and **floss once daily.**

Your oral health is important to your overall health, so the effects of an oral piercing may have a greater impact than you think. Not only could you be risking your oral health, but also the well-being of your entire body. Talk with your dentist for more information.