

Oral Health *facts*



Most dentists discourage oral piercing because of health risks.

Some of the health risks are:

- **Infection**—the mouth is moist with many germs. More bacteria can be introduced by unsterile piercing equipment or touching mouth jewelry.
- **Bleeding**—damage to the tongue's blood vessels during piercing can cause serious blood loss.
- **Swelling, pain and nerve damage**—swelling and pain are common after piercing. The tongue could swell so much that it blocks the airway. It's possible to puncture a nerve during tongue piercing and cause permanent damage.
- **Choking hazard**— loose jewelry can become a choking hazard and, if swallowed, can injure the digestive track or lungs.
- **Damage to the teeth**—the jewelry can chip, crack or scratch teeth causing permanent damage. It can also damage crowns or fillings.
- **Gum disease**—the jewelry can injure the gums causing them to pull away from the tooth. Teeth may become loose or need to be removed.
- **Blood-borne diseases**—hepatitis or herpes simplex virus can be transmitted.
- **Allergic response** —many people can be allergic to metal used in jewelry.

For more information on oral piercing risks visit:

<http://bit.ly/OralPiercing>



Ohio Department of Health
Oral Health Section

246 North High Street • Columbus, Ohio 43215

614-466-4180 • www.odh.ohio.gov/odhPrograms/ohs/oral/oral1.aspx