Lip Aftercare Information

Facial/Oral piercings are unique in that they require both body and oral aftercare. The piercing in the mouth should be tended to by using the first set of suggestions labeled ‘Primary Oral Suggestions’. The piercing on the face should be tended to by using the second set of suggestions labeled ‘Primary Facial Suggestions’.

Primary Oral Suggestions

Oral Rinse
The optimal way to care for your piercing is to rinse your mouth for 30-60 seconds with a medical-grade oral rinse (such as Tech 2000 or Biotene) after every meal during the initial healing period (3-6 weeks). If a medical grade oral rinse is not available, the next best thing is to dilute 4 ounces of an oral anti-septic with 4 ounces of water. This will de-infect the anti-septic and prevent it from irritating your piercing. (Note: Do not use plain mouth-wash because it will do nothing for your piercing—only mask your halitosis.) Be careful not to over-clean your piercing, as this will prevent proper healing. (Signs of over-cleaning include a very white or yellow looking tongue.)

Sea Salt Rinse
In addition to the oral rinse after every meal, sea salt soaks will also help heal your piercing. First, fill a fresh disposable cup with approximately 8 ounces of water and add ½ teaspoon of sea salt, stirring until it is dissolved. Then, rinse your mouth for approximately 15 seconds. Sea salt rinses should be performed after smoking or drinking anything other than bottled water. Note: Some piercers and piercings have had much success by substituting sea salt rinses for medical-grade oral rinses.

Ice
Ice and other cold liquids can help reduce swelling. Ice pops, ice cream, and frozen yogurt are also good ways to reduce swelling, but be sure to perform either a sea-salt or oral rinse following your snack (this is not necessary if you just use plain ice). Swelling tends to last 3-5 days.

Ibuprofen
For those who are extremely sensitive, an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen (Motrin IB, Advil, etc.) can help reduce swelling and pain.

Primary Facial Suggestions

Anti-bacterial Soap
The optimal way to care for your piercing is to clean it twice daily (if you are physically active, try to schedule your cleanings after you exercise). The easiest and most comfortable way to clean your piercing is either during or immediately following a hot shower. The hot water and steam will help soften your skin and loosen the crust at the base of your jewelry (making it easier to remove). While in the shower, wash your hands thoroughly with anti-bacterial soap—preferably a medical grade soap such as Provon or Satin. ( Beware: anti-bacterial soaps containing fragrances can irritate your piercing or cause allergic reactions.)

Next, gently remove the crust from your jewelry with a disposable, antibacterial soap in your hands and rub them together as to create a nice lather. Gently wipe the jewelry and your piercing with the tips of your fingers, being careful not to scratch or irritate the area. Once the jewelry and piercing are lathered with soap, spin the jewelry so that the ball on the jewelry rests on one hole of your piercing; then, spin it so that the ball rests on the opposite hole. This process will help run some soap into the wound, helping to ward off bacteria. After spinning the jewelry back and forth several times, rinse the area and jewelry thoroughly while continuing to spin the jewelry back and forth. (Tip: Do not place your piercing directly into the shower’s streaming water. Instead, try to redirect the water with your hands in order to reduce the intensity of rinsing.) If your starter jewelry is not a captive bead ring or circular barbell, try your best to perform the above process without overworking and irritating the area.

Sea Salt Soaks
After completing the above process, you can perform your sea salt soaks either in or out of the shower. First, fill a fresh disposable cup with approximately 8 ounces of water and add ½ teaspoon of sea salt, stirring until it is dissolved. When ready, either place the cup over the piercing—forming a vacuum-type seal—or dip the piercing into the cup. If either of these techniques are not possible, pre-soak a fresh tissue, cotton-ball, swab, or square in the sea salt solution and firmly press it on your piercing. In order to promote effectiveness, the first sea salt soak should last at least 10 minutes. Additional soaks should last at least 5-10 minutes. Following the sea salt soak, pat your piercing and jewelry dry with a fresh disposable paper or cotton product.

Ibuprofen
For those who are extremely sensitive, an over-the-counter anti-inflammatory such as ibuprofen (Motrin IB, Advil, etc.) can help reduce swelling and pain.

Additional Tips

1. Remember: A piercing is a wound. Consequently, you should expect tenderness, swelling, discoloration, and possibly bruising, bleeding, and itching. Also, a natural part of the process for healing any wound includes the secretion of a white-yellow fluid (containing dead cells and blood plasma). This fluid will dry and form crust on your jewelry. To properly remove this crust, refer to the Primary Suggestions for healing your piercing.
2. Never touch your piercing without first washing your hands with anti-bacterial soap. This is a great way to avoid infections even after your piercing is healed.
3. Do not use petroleum-based ointments (e.g., Neosporin, Bactracin, etc.), peroxide, alcohol, Betadine, iodine, and Hibiclens!! These substances can hinder and prolong the healing process.
4. Check the accessories (e.g., balls, gem-ends, dice, etc.) on your jewelry for tightness at least once a day. Make sure your hands are first cleaned with anti-bacterial soap!! Checking your accessories is something that you should make habitual throughout the life of your piercing. Remember: tighten all threaded accessories by turning them to the right (righty-tighty, lefty-loosy).
5. During the entire healing period, the jewelry should remain in place to act as a drain. If the jewelry is too large to allow adequate drainage, it could be removed, the jewelry should remain in place to act as a drain. If the jewelry is too large to allow adequate drainage, it could be replaced with a smaller size by a piercing professional. Removing your jewelry prematurely can cause an infected hole to close up, trapping an infection and leading to complications requiring a medical professional. If you feel that the normal secretion is turning into a thicker and darker discharge, please do not hesitate to contact your physician for more information (e.g., antibiotics).
6. Always wear loose and clean clothing around your new piercing. Tight or unclean clothing can irritate or infect the piercing.
7. Do not drink water or use soft drinks to rinse your piercing. They may contain antibacterial soaps that can hinder or delay the healing process.
8. After washing, gently pat the area dry with a fresh tissue or clean towel. DO NOT rub the area vigorously.
9. Avoid using any over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen (Motrin IB, Advil, etc.) for the first 2-3 weeks after your piercing.
10. Do not use any salt solutions, hydrogen peroxide, or warm water to clean your piercing.

Approximate Healing Period: Lip: 6 to 8 weeks