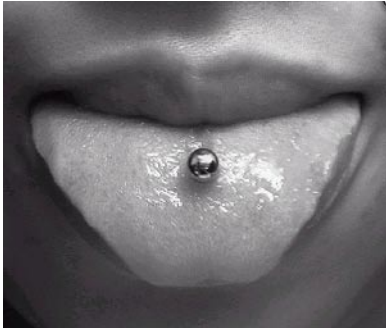


## Tongue Aftercare Information

### 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 antiseptic with 4 ounces of water. This will de-intensify the antiseptic 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 ¼ 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 piercees 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.

#### Brushing Your Teeth

It is important to brush your teeth three times daily while your piercing is healing. Brushing your teeth will cut down on the amount of bacteria and food particles in your mouth. It is suggested that you purchase a new soft-bristle toothbrush to use during the initial healing period. Also, plaque (a white crusty shell) will begin to build up on your tongue jewelry if you do not gently brush the balls and post. You should brush your jewelry daily if you want to prevent plaque build-up.

### Additional Tips

According to piercing-friendly physician Dr. Janet L. H. Keating with the Duke University Student Health Service, one of the best ways to care for and heal a piercing is to “promote healthy lifestyle habits.” Some additional tips for this include:

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, Bacitracin, etc.), peroxide, alcohol, Betadine, iodine, and Hibaclense!! 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 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 advanced treatment (e.g., antibiotics).
6. Always wear loose and clean clothing around your new piercing. Tight or unclean clothing can irritate or infect the piercing, possibly causing it to migrate.
7. Do not engage in rough activity that may threaten your piercing. Intense friction and pulling on a fresh piercing is a common way to trigger migration, a process in which the body “pushes” the jewelry out of the body.
8. Do not expose your fresh piercing to oral contact or other bodily fluids. Use protective barriers such as condoms, dental dams, and finger cots—even if you are in a monogamous relationship.
9. Do not expose your piercing to cosmetics such as make-up, hair styling products, lotion, etc. Cosmetics contain many different ingredients and can cause irritation and infection.
10. Eat nutrient-dense meals throughout the day and consider supplementing your diet with Vitamin C (3000 mg in mineral ascorbate form) and Zinc (120 mg for males and 60 mg for females). These supplements are most effective during the first 2-3 weeks of the healing process. If you are very active (e.g., work hard, partake in regular exercise, etc.) extra nutrient-dense meals and an additional multi-vitamin supplement may help keep your immune system working efficiently.
11. Drink plenty of fluids. 8-10 glasses of bottled or purified water are a good way to keep your body hydrated.
12. Try to get at least 8 hours of sleep a night. This is considered the optimal amount of sleep for the body. This will help your body heal as best as possible. If you are living in a high-stress environment, consider resting as much as you can in your down time.
13. Try not to sleep on your new piercing. This cause irritation and prolong the healing process.
14. Replace your bedding with clean sets of sheets, blankets, and pillow-cases as much as possible during the healing period.
15. Do not take out your jewelry for very long. Even a seemingly well healed piercing can close-up in a matter of hours.
16. Avoid going into a pool, hot tub, lake, etc. These types of water can be unclean and may induce infection.

### Approximate Healing Period

Tongue: 4 to 6 weeks