**General Oral Piercing Aftercare Instructions**

**CLEANING SOLUTIONS**

* Use one or more of the following solutions for inside the mouth:

• Alcohol-free and hydrogen peroxide-free mouth rinse. Or you can use dry mouth oral rinse for hydration.

• Plain clean water. Bottled or filtered water is preferred.

• Packaged sterile saline solution with no additives (read the label). This is not for internal use but external use only (like cleaning the outside of your lip piercing). Regardless of the brand of saline, the label should list sterile and isotonic. The only ingredients included should be water and 0.9% or 9mg/ml sodium chloride.

**CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS FOR MOUTH PIERCINGS**

* INTERNAL:

• Wash your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning or touching your piercing for any reason.

• Keeping good oral hygiene practices is important in maintaining a healthy mouth and piercing. You will want to floss, brush, and use mouth rinse at least twice a day. It is vital to not overuse the mouth rinse.

• Gently brush the jewelry with a clean toothbrush regularly to avoid plaque build up.

• Rinse with water (bottled or filtered) thoroughly after every time you eat, drink or smoke.

* EXTERNAL:

• Wash your hands thoroughly prior to cleaning or touching your piercing for any reason.

• Rinse your piercing thoroughly with warm water in the shower once a day. Then rinse with saline twice a day.

• Gently remove any discharge or crust that may have built up on your jewelry, then dry the area carefully with clean gauze or paper towels.

**WHAT IS NORMAL?**

• For the first three to five days you may experience swelling, light bleeding, bruising, tenderness, and/or a whitish to yellowish secretion that may form crust on the jewelry.

• After the first week, you may still continue to experience some minor swelling and secretion.

• A piercing might seem healed before the healing process is complete because piercings heal from the outside in. Although it feels fine, the tissue remains fragile on the inside. Be patient, and keep cleaning throughout the entire healing period.

• For lip piercings, it is typical for the jewelry to “nest” slightly into the lip (on the inside) once it is healed.

• Even healed piercings that you have had for years can shrink or close within a few hours if the jewelry is removed. If you like your piercing, keep your jewelry in!

**WHAT TO DO TO HELP REDUCE SWELLING**

• Cold water rinses may help reduce swelling.

• Reduce movement of the area and do not play with your jewelry.

• Sleep with your head elevated above your heart during the first few nights.

• If you feel the skin is actually growing over the jewelry (inside or outside), visit your piercer immediately for a longer bar to avoid embedded jewelry.

**EATING TIPS**

• Take your time eating until you are used to the piercing and the jewelry is downsized to prevent irritation or prolonged healing.

• Avoid eating spicy, salty, acidic, or hot temperature foods or beverages for the first two weeks.

• Cold foods and beverages can be soothing and help reduce swelling.

• For labret (lip) piercings, be cautious about opening your mouth too wide as this can result in the jewelry catching on your teeth.

**ORAL PIERCING TIPS**

• Once the swelling has subsided, it is vital to replace the original, longer jewelry with a shorter post or barbell to avoid damage to the teeth and gums.

• With clean hands or paper products, regularly check threaded ends on your jewelry for tightness. For threadless jewelry, make sure there is no gap between the post (inside) to the top (outside). In case of a gap, place your index finger and thumb on both ends of the jewelry and press them together. Be sure to check that the gap is closed.

• Once healed, continue to gently brush the jewelry with a clean toothbrush regularly to avoid plaque build up.

• Stay healthy; the healthier your lifestyle, the easier it will be for your piercing to heal. Get enough sleep, eat a nutritious diet, and stay hydrated.

**WHAT TO AVOID**

• Do not play with your jewelry. Long term effects include permanent damage to teeth and gums.

• Avoid undue trauma; excessive talking or playing with the jewelry can cause scar tissue, migration, and other complications.

• Avoid using mouthwash containing alcohol or hydrogen peroxide. It can irritate the piercing and delay healing.

• Avoid oral sexual contact including wet kissing or oral sex during healing.

• Avoid chewing on tobacco, gum, fingernails, pencils, and other foreign objects that could harbor bacteria.

• Avoid sharing plates, cups, and eating utensils.

• Avoid using straws. Straw use can increase the risk of swelling and bleeding.

• Minimize the intake of smoking and vaping (tobacco or cannabis). It increases risks and prolongs healing time.

• Avoid aspirin, alcohol, and large amounts of caffeine as long as you are experiencing bleeding or swelling.

• Avoid submerging healing piercings in bodies of water such as lakes, pools, oceans, and even the bathtub.