

Oral Piercing

While many people think this trend looks cool, it has many possible and harmful side effects.

Common symptoms after oral piercing include pain, swelling, infection, an increased flow of saliva (“spit”) and injuries to the gums:

- Millions of bacteria (“germs”) live in your mouth, so oral piercings may become infected easily.
- Swelling of the tongue is a common side effect but it is possible for the tongue to swell large enough to block your airway and prevent breathing.
- Piercing can cause uncontrollable bleeding and nerve damage. If a blood vessel was in the path of the needle during the piercing, severe and difficult-to-control bleeding can result.
- Blood clots or blood poisoning can occur.

And the jewelry itself can be hazardous or cause other problems:

- You can choke on the studs, barbells or hoops that become loose in your mouth.
- Teeth can chip or crack from contact with the jewelry.
- Bacteria that breeds around the piercing can cause bad breath.
- The jewelry can prevent you from speaking clearly or cause problems with chewing and swallowing food.
- The metals may cause an allergic reaction.

Since oral health is important for overall health, the effects of an oral piercing may have a greater impact than one may think. Unfortunately, many people with oral piercings don’t realize that these side effects could happen to them.