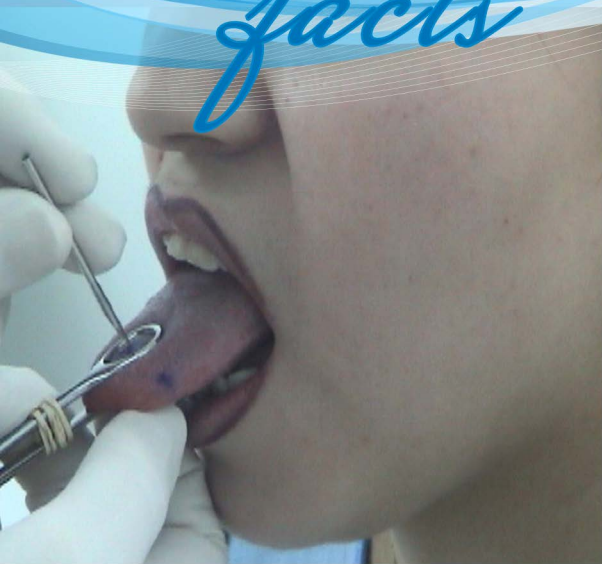


Oral Health *facts*



Most dentists discourage oral piercing because of health risks.

Some of the health risks are:

- **Infection**—the mouth is moist with many bacteria (germs) making it a perfect place for infections. 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 injure a nerve during tongue piercing, which may affect your sense of taste or how you move your mouth.
- **Choking hazard**— loose jewelry can become a choking hazard and, if swallowed, can injure the digestive tract or lungs.
- **Excessive drooling**—the piercing can cause you to produce more saliva.
- **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 B or C or herpes simplex virus can be transmitted.
- **Allergic response** —many people can be allergic to metal used in jewelry.