



Dental Resource Center
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Oral Piercing

Because your mouth contains millions of bacteria, infection is a common complication of oral piercing.

Pain and swelling are other side effects of piercing. Your tongue, a popular piercing site in the mouth – could swell large enough to close off your airway! Piercing also can cause uncontrollable bleeding or nerve damage.

The jewelry itself also presents some hazards. You can choke on any studs, barbells or hoops that come loose in your mouth, and contact with the jewelry can chip your teeth.

Common symptoms after oral piercing include pain, swelling, infection, increased flow of saliva, and injuries to the gum tissue. If a blood vessel is in the path of the needle during the piercing, severe and difficult-to-control bleeding can result. For example, chipped or cracked teeth, blood poisoning, or even blood clots can occur. For many, the swelling of the tongue is a common side effect. And in extreme cases, a severely swollen tongue can actually close off the airway and prevent breathing.