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1 Clean the inside of your mouth. Rinse your mouth for 30 seconds using an alcohol-free mouthwash or salt solution after every time you eat, drink, or smoke. Rinse before bedtime as well. To make a salt solution, combine 1/4 teaspoon (1.2 ml) of non-iodized salt with 8 ounces (237 ml) of boiling water. Stir to dissolve the salt, and let it cool. Don't increase the salt content, as this could irritate your mouth. 2 Clean the outside of the piercing and jewelry. Once a day, preferably in the shower when any crusted matter and debris around the piercing has softened, lather a mild soap with your fingers and gently wash the piercing site and jewelry. Gently rotate the jewelry for a thorough cleaning and to remove debris. Rinse thoroughly, gently rotating the jewelry again. Always wash your hands thoroughly before cleaning or touching your piercing. Don't clean the piercing with soap more than once a day. Advertisement 3 Soak the piercing. Once or twice a day, fill a small cup with the salt solution and soak the piercing for 5 to 10 minutes. Rinse the area with warm water after. Brush and floss at least once a day. Brush and floss every meal if possible. Rinse your mouth with alcohol-free mouthwash after brushing to remove any leftover food particles from your mouth. Be gentle while brushing, so that you do not irritate the piercing.[2] 5 Eat slowly and carefully. Soft foods are recommended for the first few days. Once you return to solid food, cut it into small pieces. Place bite-sized pieces of food directly onto your molars. Be careful not to bite your lip, and avoid contact with the piercing as much as possible. Chew as far away from the piercing as you can. In the first couple days especially, try foods like:[3] Ice cream Yogurt Pudding Cold foods and drinks that soothe and help swell. Don't use chewing gum until your piercing heals. 6 Reduce swelling. Suck on small pieces of ice to alleviate pain and swelling. Pain relieving anti-inflammatories such as ibuprofen can also be used. Advertisement 1 Avoid eating, drinking, and smoking for the first 3 hours. For as long as possible, and certainly for the first 3 hours after receiving your piercing, leave your lip piercing alone.[4] Avoid talking as much as possible. Until your piercing is completely healed, you should also avoid: Alcohol, tobacco, caffeine, and drugs Sticky foods, including oatmeal Hard food, candy, and gum Spicy food Salty foods Chewing on non-edible items, such as your fingers, pencils, and pens. 2 Leave the piercing alone. Cleaning time is the only time you should touch your piercing. Touching it too much can lead to infections, swelling, pain, and increased healing time. Don't play with it, and don't let others play with it, and avoid contact and motion as much as possible.[5] During the healing process, you should also avoid: Oral sex and kissing Sharing food, drinks, and utensils Licking your piercing or playing with it with your tongue or fingers Rigorous activity and physical contact involving the face 3 Stay away from water. This includes chlorinated water like pools and hot tubs, but it also means fresh water, lengthy showers and baths, and steam rooms and saunas. Keep your piercing dry, otherwise it will take longer to heal and may not heal properly. 4 Avoid substances that could aggravate the piercing. Don't clean your piercing with rubbing alcohol, scented soaps, hydrogen peroxide, antibacterial ointments, or petroleum-based creams or gels.[6] These products can cause irritation, dryness, cell damage, or clogged pores. Keep the area around the piercing free of makeup, cosmetics, and facial creams or lotions. 5 Don't change the jewelry until your lip piercing has healed. Not only can this aggravate newly healed skin, but the piercing can start to close immediately.[7] 6 Maintain good oral hygiene. After your piercing has healed, you don't have to keep up with the multiple daily mouthwash rinses and soaks, but clean the piercing and jewelry in the shower with mild soap every few days. Brush and floss regularly. Advertisement 1 Recognize the signs of infection. Before getting your lip pierced, know what to look for regarding infections. Symptoms include pus, green or yellow discharge, tingling or loss of feeling around the piercing site, fever, and excessive bleeding, pain, redness, and swelling. Leave the jewelry in if you suspect an infection, but seek medical attention immediately. 2 Know what an allergic reaction will look like. Body jewelry often contains nickel, which is a common allergen for many people. Symptoms will likely appear within 12 to 48 hours, and can include itching and swelling, crusty or scaly blisters, and redness, rash, or dry skin.[8] Your lip piercing won't heal properly if you are allergic to the jewelry, so go to the doctor immediately if you suspect an allergy. If you can't wear necklaces, earrings, rings or bracelets containing nickel, you won't be able to wear it in your lip, either. Look for jewelry labeled "surgical steel" or "nickel free." In addition to nickel, some people may be allergic to copper or brass. These 3 base metals cause the majority of allergic reactions to jewelry. Advertisement Add New Question Question I got my lip pierced this past Saturday. It's a little swollen, but it doesn't hurt. I do notice a little bit of pus coming out, but not a lot. I clean it every time and make sure it's always clean. Is that normal, even if it's just a little? Marsha Durkin, RN Registered Nurse Marsha Durkin is a Registered Nurse based in Waukegan, Illinois. With over 15 years of professional experience, she works both as a nurse and a Laboratory Information Specialist for Insight Hospital and Medical Center. Marsha received her Associate's Degree in Nursing from Olney Central College in 1987. No, pus is not normal. Please see your doctor to get checked for an infection. Question I just pierced my lip at home the other night and now its really swollen. I might be allergic to the jewelry. Would I be able to change the jewelry and keep my piercings, or will I lose them? Marsha Durkin, RN Registered Nurse Marsha Durkin is a Registered Nurse based in Waukegan, Illinois. With over 15 years of professional experience, she works both as a nurse and a Laboratory Information Specialist for Insight Hospital and Medical Center. Marsha received her Associate's Degree in Nursing from Olney Central College in 1987. If your piercing is really swollen, you need to see a doctor to check for infection and get medication if needed. An infection is very serious. Question Can you use salt that you have in the kitchen or does it have to be a certain type of salt? It needs to be salt without iodine and other preservatives. Sea salt works best. See more answers Ask a Question Advertisement Thanks Thanks Advertisement This article was co-authored by Karissa Sanford. Karissa Sanford is the Co-owner of Make Me Holey Body Piercing, a piercing studio based in the San Francisco Bay Area that specializes in safe and friendly body piercing. Karissa has over 10 years of piercing experience and is a member of the Association of Professional Piercers (APP). This article has been viewed 678,709 times. Co-authors: 51 Updated: April 16, 2025 Views: 678,709 Categories: Piercings Print Send fan mail to authors Thank you to all authors for creating a page that has been read 678,709 times. "I recently got my snakebites done, and I only have an oral spray for the inside of my mouth to ease swelling. I've just made up a salt solution and it's now in the fridge for when I'm finished eating. It also made me realize that drinking coffee wasn't the best idea."..." more Thanks your story We can all agree that not everyone is into lip piercings, and if you have lip piercings, you have already faced your unfair share of being judged wrongly. But that is not what we are talking about today. Instead, we'll look at the healing process for the lip piercing, how long it takes to heal, and what you need to know about a healing and/or a healed lip piercing.This is the kind of information that would be helpful to anyone thinking of getting a lip piercing because it would be their ultimate guide towards proper care of their lip piercing and also a guide on what not to do.So, let's get right into it.How do you know if your piercing is healing?Anyone with a lip piercing is considered to be the coolest person on earth. But also, these individuals have had to ensure a great deal of pain, from the time they got the piercing and throughout the piercing's healing.Lip piercing is the type of body piercing penetrating the lips and/or the surrounding area, such as the philtrum, which is the tiny groove running from the Cupid's bow right to the nose's base. You can choose the placement of the lip piercing based on your preferred aesthetic.Regardless of the type of lip piercing you get - there are about 14 types of lip piercings; the healing will vary. In most cases, the lip piercing will take between 6 and 8 weeks to heal fully; but there are cases where the lip piercing takes up to 6 months to heal fully.Factors such as your diet, personal health, and also aftercare all affect the healing process.You can tell if the lip piercing is healing by looking at the changes around the piercing. According to the experts, the first few weeks after getting your lips pierced are very crucial to the overall healing process because this is the time when the piercing re-epithelializes - this is the process that results in the creation of scar tissue that will seal the hole in the bacteria, preventing the breeding of bacteria.What this means is that you will know that a piercing is healing if you notice the development of scar tissue. Also, when the area around the piercing starts to feel normal, when there is no redness, and when you notice a normal discharge seen from healing tissue, then it means that the lip piercing is starting to heal. Also, there will be less crustiness around the jewelry if the piercing he healing.It's also important for you to keep in mind that during the healing process, there will be some itchiness at the piercing site and also the release of a whitish-yellowish fluid around the area that isn't pus; and this will form a coat around the jewelry. With time, and as the piercing heals, this discharge will reduce.How do you know if your piercing is infected?Essentially, the lip piercing is at a very high risk of infection because it is often in contact with different things, including food, drinks, makeup, and even bacteria from the mouth. Therefore, you'd have to take extra care of the piercing and pay attention, noticing even the slightest changes in and around the piercing.These are the signs of an infected body piercing:The area around the piercing and the jewelry is swollen, hot, painful, very red or even dark, and just unwellThere is pus or blood coming from the piercing. In most cases, the pus is white, yellow, or greenishThe piercing area might also be smelly.The other things that point to an infected lip piercing include redness that doesn't just want to go away, a burning sensation, or itching.7 Signs Of A Healing Lip PiercingBody piercings like lip piercings all go through 4 main stages of healing, and these stages will guide you on what to expect as your piercing heals.These stages include:1. HemostasisThis is the very first stage of healing for your lip piercing, and it's more or less focused on stopping blood loss. 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Proliferative PhaseIn this phase, there is the formation of the granulation tissue as the fibroblasts make their way into the wound, contracting, and pulling in the outer edges of the wound towards the center, enhancing healing.This is also the main reason why you shouldn't remove your jewelry from the healing piercing too soon, especially when the piercing looks healed.This is important because the exterior edges always heal before the center of the wound, and removal of the jewelry before complete healing would mean the closure of the hole, and re-inserting the jewelry would worsen things and even damage the delicate tissue forcing the healing process to restart.5. MaturationThe last healing stage for your lip piercing is the maturation stage. 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