

Focus on Oral Health

Volume 1, Issue 1

March 2007

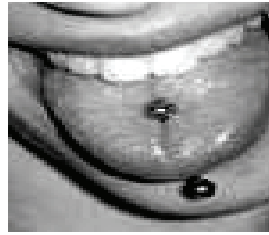


NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

Dangers of Oral Piercings

What are oral piercings?

Oral piercings are any piercings of the tongue, lips or cheek. In recent years, oral piercings have become a form of self-expression. As with pierced ears, the metal jewelry used in oral piercings comes in different styles, including studs, barbells and rings. However, piercing your tongue, lips or cheek involves greater health risks than piercing your ears. Before having any part of your mouth pierced, you should seek advice from your dentist.



Skip the oral piercing and let your smile make your fashion statement.

the needle during piercing, the result can lead to uncontrolled bleeding and serious blood loss.

Pain and swelling — Pain and swelling are common symptoms of oral piercings. In extreme cases, a severely swollen tongue actually can close off the airway and restrict breathing.

Chipped or cracked teeth — Contact with oral jewelry can fracture teeth. Teeth that have restorations, such as crowns or caps, also can be damaged if the jewelry strikes them.

Ingested Jewelry — Jewelry may become loose and swallowed which could lead to serious internal complications, even surgery.

Injury to the gums — Not only can metal jewelry injure soft gum tissue, it can cause the gums to recede. In addition

to looking unattractive, recessed gums leave your tooth root more vulnerable to decay and periodontal disease.

Interference with normal oral function — Jewelry in the mouth can cause excessive saliva flow, impede your ability to pronounce words correctly, and cause problems with chewing and swallowing.

Blood-borne diseases — Oral piercings have been identified by the National Institutes of Health as a possible factor in transmitting hepatitis B, C, D and G.

What to know more?

There is a wealth of information regarding dental care at your fingertips. Just go to the American Dental Association's Web site at www.ada.org.

Although some piercings are less problematic and have limited interference with normal function be sure to see your dentist at the first sign of pain or problems.

Website of interest:

The optimal fluoride level in drinking water is 0.7 to 1.2 parts per million, an amount that has been proven beneficial in reducing cavities. To learn the level of fluoride in your drinking water check out the following website. You can learn about the fluoridation level in water for almost anywhere in the United States.

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/MWF/Index.asp>

Did you know?

Because flossing removes food particles and plaque between teeth that brushing misses, you should floss for your children beginning at age 4. By the time they reach age 8, most kids can begin flossing for themselves.



What are the different risks involved with oral piercings?

You may not be aware of the potential side effects of oral piercings. These include:

Infection — Our mouths contain millions of bacteria, which can lead to infection after an oral piercing.

Endocarditis — It's an inflammation of the heart valves or tissues. The wound created during oral piercing provides an opportunity for oral bacteria to enter the bloodstream, where they can travel to the heart.

Prolonged bleeding — If a blood vessel is punctured by



Fight Decay With Xylitol

Have you heard the buzz about Xylitol and wondered just what it is? Xylitol is a natural sweetener that has been shown to reduce the risk of dental decay. Although there has been a lot of interest recently here in the United States, Xylitol has been around for many years. It was discovered in the 1940s when, due to sugar shortages in Europe, Scandinavian countries began to use it as a sugar substitute. By the 1950s, children in these countries were observed to have fewer cavities than children in countries still using sugar. Today, Finland leads the world in overall mental health as they continue to depend upon Xylitol as a healthful alternative to sugar.

How does Xylitol work?

Oral bacteria takes Xylitol in as food but is unable to use the sweetener in its life cycle. This results in the inability to cause cavities, as well as reduces the adhesion of plaque and the transmission of bacteria, thus aiding in the remineralization of the tooth. In simple terms, Xylitol reduces the risk of cavities and gum disease.

Where do I find Xylitol?

Xylitol is found naturally in fruits, nuts and vegetables. It also is used in cosmetics, medications and oral hygiene products (toothpaste, mouth rinse, etc.), as well as several readily available mints, candies and gum. You'll find these in local department and grocery stores. A few to look for may include Orbit, Koolers, Altoids, and Starbucks After Coffee Gum, as well as Victoria's Secret's mints. Granulated Xylitol crystals also can be found in health food stores.

Is Xylitol for everyone?

Yes. Because it contains 40 percent fewer calories, Xylitol is a healthy alternative to regular table sugar. Xylitol also may be recommended by your dental team as a therapy if you are at high risk for cavities.

Xylitol Facts:

- Recommended use: Chew 20 to 30 minutes two to three times a day, especially following meals.
- Looks, tastes like, and has about the same relative sweetness as sucrose, but with 40 percent fewer calories.
- Long-term intake has shown to have decreased decay-causing bacteria that adhere less to the teeth.
- Short-term consumption is associated with decreased decay-causing bacteria levels.



NOTICE

Future mailings of this newsletter will be provided in electronic format. Focus on Oral Health is available on our website at <http://www.ndhealth.gov/FamilyHealth/Publications.asp?ProgramID=101>

Regional Oral Health Consultants

- NORTHEAST REGION -
Hollie Maas-Harrington, BS, RDH
701.683.9072

- SOUTHEAST REGION -
Hollie Maas-Harrington, BS, RDH
701.683.9072

- CENTRAL REGION -
Robyn Stearns, RDH, MGMT
701.222.8760 or 701.255.1348

- SOUTHWEST CENTRAL REGION -
Marlene Hulm, RDH
701.663.7962

- NORTHWEST REGION -
Tracey Haugenoe, RDH
701.774.8708

- SOUTHWEST REGION -
Carla Kelly, RDH
701.523.3423

- STATE OFFICE -
Kimberlie Yineman
Cheryle Masset-Martz
1.800.472.2286 or 701.328.2356



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH

Focus on Oral Health

is published by the

Oral Health Program
Division of Family Health
North Dakota Department of Health
600 E. Boulevard Ave., Dept. 301
Bismarck, N.D. 58505-0200

State Health Officer: Dr. Terry Dwelle
Deputy State Health Officer: Arvy Smith
Division Director: Kim Senn
Program Director: Kimberlie Yineman
Program Manager/Editor: Cheryle Mas-
set-Martz