



Helping Hands

Jennifer K. Hargleroad, DDS, MS

2105 Bighorn Road, Unit 202

Fort Collins, CO 80525

(970) 493-2254

ORAL PIERCINGS

Oral piercings have become more and more popular among teenagers and young adults in recent years. Lip, cheek and tongue piercings can have significant negative effects on the teeth and soft tissues in the mouth.

Immediate oral complications may include:

Swelling at the infection site, pain, speech difficulties, chewing and swallowing difficulties may occur for the first couple days to weeks after initial piercing. Damage to blood vessels or nerve innervations may occur with piercings which can lead to prolonged and constant pain or chronic numbness. Infections are common around the piercing site because the oral cavity is loaded with bacteria. Infectious diseases such as herpes, hepatitis B, C, D, G etc are easily transmittable from close contact with other people. There is also a potential risk for infective endocarditis from the open wound created by the piercings where bacteria enter the bloodstream and travel to the heart which poses serious risk for people that have cardiac abnormalities, some undiagnosed.

Long-term complications may include:

Wear, fractures and breakage of the teeth, as well as recession of the gingival tissues which may expose sensitive and cavity prone root structures of teeth. In these circumstances corrective measures may be taken including restorative or desensitizing dental procedures for the teeth such as fillings or crowns or gingival surgeries or soft tissue grafting for receding gingiva. These procedures can be time consuming, costly and uncomfortable for the individual.