

**Michigan Department of Community Health  
Aftercare Instructions for Piercings**

**Approximate Healing Times:**

*Lip/Labret:* Two to six (2-6) months

*Nostril or eyebrow:* Two to three (2-3) months

*Earlobe:* Four to six (4-6) weeks

*Ear cartilage:* Three to twelve (3-12) months

*Tongue:* One to two (1-2) months

*Genital:* Varies from one to twelve (1-12) months

*Other piercings:* Up to six (6) months

**Supplies Needed:** Antibacterial soap. For lip/labret or tongue piercings, an antiseptic mouthwash or salt solution (mix 1/8 teaspoon of salt with 8 ounces of warm water) is also needed.

**Aftercare Instructions:** Wash your hands. Using warm water and a cotton swab, remove any matter that may have dried on the jewelry and around the openings of the piercing.

Next, pour the cleansing agent on the jewelry and piercing, lather it up, then work the jewelry back and forth at least six (6) times. Leave the cleaning agent in contact with the piercing approximately one (1) minute. Finally rinse the agent off very thoroughly under running water, again working the jewelry back and forth at least six (6) times. Any cleaning agent left on the skin or in the piercing can cause you problems.

For lip/labret or tongue piercings, you should rinse your mouth with antiseptic mouthwash or a salt solution for 30-60 seconds. Some mouthwashes may need to be diluted with distilled water. Continue the rinses at least four to six (4-6) times a day for six to eight (6-8) weeks.

**Additional Considerations:** Genital piercings usually heal without difficulty, but problems arise from not following the “Aftercare Instructions” or becoming too rough, too soon with the piercing. Always wash your hands before touching the new piercing. Every night, remove any crusty matter with cotton swabs and use a salt solution to soak the piercing for ten (10) minutes. Make no oral contact with your new piercing without an appropriate barrier for at least three (3) months. The use of gloves for touching, condoms for intercourse, and the appropriate barriers for oral sex are highly recommended.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact the body art facility where your piercing was performed. In addition, you should seek medical attention if the piercing site becomes infected or painful, or if you develop a fever shortly after being pierced.