

Piercing Care & Healing Guide

1) Before, During & After the Piercing Procedure

Before the procedure

- **Metal allergies / skin conditions / medications:** Inform the piercer if you have nickel allergy, keloid tendency, diabetes, low immunity, or if you are taking anticoagulants or isotretinoin (acne medication).
- **Alcohol / caffeine / exercise:** Avoid alcohol, painkillers, and heavy exercise on the day of piercing (these increase blood flow and swelling).
- **Cleansing:** Shower and cleanse the piercing area beforehand. Avoid makeup, sunscreen, and hair products.
- **Clothing:** Wear loose, clean clothing. Avoid tight collars, hoodies with strings, or hats that touch the piercing area. Prepare a clean cotton pillowcase for sleeping.

During the procedure

- **Sterilization & tools:** Ensure the tools are in sealed sterile packages (indicator color changed). Needles must be single-use, and gloves must be changed between steps.
- **Jewelry material & length:** The first jewelry should have enough length to accommodate swelling. Too short = risk of embedding or infection.
- **Do not twist:** Never rotate or move the jewelry; this reopens micro-wounds and delays healing.

Immediately after (first 72 hours)

- **Hands off:** Do not touch the jewelry with unwashed hands.
- **Bleeding / discharge:** Small bleeding or clear-yellow crusting is normal.
- **Cold compress:** Wrap ice in a clean cloth, apply up to 10 min, 1–3 times/day for soft tissue (ear, lip, etc.).
- **Sleeping:** Sleep on the opposite side. Use a donut or travel pillow if needed.

Daily Care (until healed)

- **Cleaning:** 1–2 times/day with **saline solution (0.9%)**. Gently soften and remove crusts — never scrub.

- *DIY saline*: 250 ml boiled water + ¼ tsp (≈ 2.25 g) non-iodized salt. Cool completely, use within 24 h.
- **Shower OK / no swimming or sauna**: Swimming pools, sea, hot baths, and saunas should be avoided for at least 4–6 weeks.
- **Cosmetics & hair products**: Keep makeup, sprays, and dyes away from the piercing area.
- **Headphones / helmets / masks**: Avoid friction.
- **Oral piercings**: Avoid hot, spicy, or acidic foods for the first week. Use alcohol-free mouthwash. No smoking.
- **Don't twist or pull**: Don't rotate or remove jewelry. You may gently check the screw tightness with clean hands every few days.

Never use

Hydrogen peroxide, alcohol, tea tree oil, iodine, ointments, Vaseline, scrubs.
Avoid tight clothing, headset pressure, or cheap plated jewelry.

Warning signs — see your piercer or doctor

Severe redness, swelling, throbbing pain after 3–4 days, yellow/green pus, spreading red lines, fever/chills, embedding, trouble swallowing or breathing (oral), cartilage pain → **seek medical attention immediately**.

2) Healing Time & Jewelry Change Timeline

Area	Average healing	Downsizing	First design change	Swimming/Sauna
Earlobe	6–8 weeks	2–4 weeks	6–8 weeks	After 4 weeks
Helix	6–12 months	6–10 weeks	3–6 months	6–8 weeks
Forward helix / snug / rook / anti-tragus	6–12 months	6–12 weeks	4–6 months	6–8 weeks
Tragus	4–8 months	6–10 weeks	3–6 months	6–8 weeks
Daith	6–12 months	6–10 weeks	4–6 months	6–8 weeks
Conch	6–12 months	6–12 weeks	4–6 months	6–8 weeks

Industrial	9–12 months+	8–12 weeks	6–9 months	8 weeks
Nostril	3–6 months	4–8 weeks	3–4 months	6 weeks
High nostril	6–9 months	6–10 weeks	4–6 months	6–8 weeks
Septum	6–8 weeks	2–4 weeks	8–12 weeks	4 weeks
Bridge	3–6 months	4–8 weeks	3–4 months	6 weeks
Eyebrow	2–3 months	3–4 weeks	8–10 weeks	4–6 weeks
Tongue	4–6 weeks	7–10 days	4–6 weeks	3–4 weeks
Smiley / frenulum	4–8 weeks	2–3 weeks	6–8 weeks	4 weeks
Lip / labret / medusa	6–8 weeks	2–4 weeks	8–10 weeks	4–6 weeks
Nipple	6–12 months	6–10 weeks	4–6 months	8 weeks
Navel	6–12 months	6–10 weeks	4–6 months	8 weeks
Surface / dermal	6–12 months	6–10 weeks	4–6 months	8 weeks

Notes

- **Cartilage heals slowly** due to limited blood flow. Long-lasting tenderness is normal.
- **Tongue** heals fastest (swelling peaks early, resolves within 1–2 weeks).
- Times vary with hygiene, lifestyle, and smoking status.

3) Initial Jewelry Sizing

- **Gauge:** Earlobe, nose, lip → 18–16G (1.0–1.2 mm); cartilage, tongue → 16–14G (1.2–1.6 mm).
- **Length / inner diameter:** Start slightly longer for swelling, shorten during downsizing.
- **Material:** **ASTM F136 titanium** (lightweight, nickel-free). Only **PVD/anodized** coating allowed, **no gold plating**.

4) Daily Care Details

- **External:** Soften crusts with warm water, remove gently with saline, rinse, and pat dry.
 - **Oral:** Rinse after meals, use alcohol-free mouthwash once or twice daily.
 - **Check screws:** Tighten lightly every few days with clean hands.
 - **Exercise:** Avoid intense sweating or tight clothing for 1–2 weeks.
-

5) Downsizing vs. First Style Change

- **Downsizing:** Same material & design, just shorter bar; after 70–90 % of swelling subsides.
 - **First style change:** Rings or decorative pieces; only after tissue is fully stable (see table).
 - **Cartilage:** Always be more conservative with timing.
-

6) Common Issues

- **Bump (not keloid):** Caused by friction or over-cleaning. Reduce cleaning to 1–2 × daily, use silicone disc if needed.
 - **Dryness / irritation:** Reduce cleaning frequency; check saline concentration.
 - **Embedding:** Jewelry too short → visit studio immediately for longer post.
 - **Allergy:** Persistent itching/blisters → switch to pure titanium; avoid plated metals.
-

7) Health Considerations

- If you have a weak immune system or slow healing, **extend healing time 1.5–2× longer** than average.
 - Delay swimming, sauna, and food handling until fully healed.
 - Fever, fatigue, or increasing pain = see a doctor.
-

Quick Summary

- **Initial jewelry:** ASTM F136 titanium (PVD/anodized gold OK).
- **Avoid:** Rotation, alcohol/peroxide, ointments, swimming early.
- **Downsizing:** 2–10 weeks; **First style change:** 6–24 weeks+.
- **Cartilage heals slowly** (up to a year is normal).