

TONGUE STUDS CARRY SERIOUS HEALTH RISKS

Tongue piercing put people at risk for serious, potentially fatal infections, such as Ludwig's angina or endocarditic, US Researchers said.

Many people know that oral piercing can cause chipped teeth, recessed gums and nerve damage, but tongue piercing can cause greater risks because they are open wounds, said researchers at the Academy of General Dentistry.

The piercing hole allows bacteria to travel through the bloodstream, which can lead to Ludwig's angina, an infection of the floor of the mouth that causes swelling and can close off the airway. People with a history of heart defects also are at risk for endocarditic, which occurs when bacteria infect the heart through the bloodstream.

Tongue piercing can cause greater risks because they are open wounds.

Because most body pierces are not medical professionals, people do not usually receive antibiotics or postoperative care needed to keep infections from becoming fatal, and people may not know when swelling is abnormal, researchers said. Ludwig's angina can be treated with an incision and drainage, and endocarditic with antibiotics.

Athletes participating in inter-scholastic sports on all levels of play are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind. This includes body-piercing jewelry that is visible to the official's eye. Medical alert tags are the exception. The New York State mandate is in compliance with the individual sport rules books.

RVC Health Online
June 15, 2004
Youth Ministry Apostolate
Diocese of Rockville Centre, NY