



CDA Position on **Oral Jewellery**

Body art is increasing in popularity within a largely-unregulated industry. It includes tattooing, body piercings and oral jewellery, which consists of soft tissue piercings and/or objects attached to teeth. All body piercing presents a level of risk of infection. Because of the presence and variety of bacteria in the oral cavity, oral piercings are considered to have higher risk and are therefore strongly discouraged.

However, research indicates that knowledge of risks associated with body art is not a deterrent even for persons who have had complications. Documented complications are related either to (a) the jewellery (aspiration, allergy or chronic injury to adjacent teeth/mucosa, including tooth fracture and gum recession, which can lead to tooth loss) or to (b) the piercing procedure (local bleeding, swelling, nerve damage, toxic shock, permanent drooling, impaired sense of taste, or distant infections of the liver, heart or brain). Serious infections led Health Canada to issue Infection Prevention and Control Practices for Personal Services, Tattooing, Ear/Body Piercing, and Electrolysis in 1999. These may be accessed at: <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/99pdf/cdr25s3e.pdf>

CDA offers the following recommendations:

1. Dental practitioners should discuss with patients the potential risks of oral piercings and jewellery, as well as recommendations for hygiene and management of existing piercings to help reduce damaging effects. Useful information includes the recognition and management of oral and systemic side effects and the use of appropriate materials and adhesives for tooth jewellery.
2. Dental patients wishing to have oral piercings should be advised to obtain information about (a) experience of the artist, including complication rate (b) infection control practices and (c) after-care instructions.

Approved
CDA Board of Directors
January 2006