

Tongue Piercing and Tongue Splitting

Overview

Tongue-splitting is a type of body modification in which your tongue is split into two pieces, creating a "forked" appearance. Tongue-splitting can interfere with your speech, chewing or swallowing. That may seem like a mere inconvenience until you consider that tongue-splitting may also cause:

- Infection, pain and swelling
- Increased saliva flow
- Nerve damage
- Numbness
- Loss of taste
- Difficulty speaking

These harmful effects can happen during the tongue-splitting, soon after, or even long after the procedure. An infection can quickly become life threatening if it's not treated promptly. Tongue-splitting carries a potential risk of endocarditis, an inflammation of the heart valves or tissues. Bacteria can enter the bloodstream through the tongue-splitting site in the mouth and travel to the heart and cause problems. This is a risk for people with heart conditions and, in the worst of cases, may result in death.

After a tongue-splitting, the tongue may swell. There have been reports of swelling serious enough to block the airway. And it's very possible to puncture a nerve during tongue-splitting. If this happens, you may experience a numb tongue, which is a sign of nerve damage. The injured nerve may affect your sense of taste, or how you move your mouth. And damage to the tongue's blood vessels can cause serious blood loss.

Tongue-splitting will be an added responsibility to your life, requiring constant attention and upkeep. Talk to your dentist for more information.