ORAL FITNESS FACT SHEET

Oral Piercing and Soldiers

Body piercing has become viewed as a form of self-expression in today's society. Piercing areas of the face or mouth is especially popular, and can be quite invasive and disfiguring.

AR 670-1 states that soldiers are not allowed to attach, fix, or display objects, articles, jewelry, or ornamentation to or through the skin. The term "skin" includes the tongue, lips, inside the mouth, and other surfaces of the body. The only exception is that female soldiers are authorized to wear earrings.

Dangers of Oral Piercing

AR 670-1 is important not only for soldiers' appearance, but for their ***health*** as well. Piercers who do not follow infection control procedures place clients at risk of diseases such as hepatitis, HIV, herpes, Epstein-Barr, or tetanus.

Oral piercing has a high risk of complications because it is usually performed by someone who is unlicensed or self-trained. Common problems following oral piercing include the following:

- Pain.
- Swelling.
- Prolonged bleeding.
- Infection.
- Increased salivation.
- Interference with speaking, chewing, and swallowing.
- Scar-tissue formation.
- Hypersensitivity or allergy to metals.
- Collection of debris in the pierced site.
- Inhalation of pieces of jewelry.

Damage from Oral Piercing

The most common problems caused by oral piercing are damage to the teeth and gums. Metal objects fastened to the tongue or lips are often accidentally bitten. As a result, teeth become chipped, cracked, and even broken. These injuries can be quite painful and expensive to repair. The metal objects can also rub on the gums. The gums can become injured or even striped away from the teeth.

Be smart – don't fall for the latest fad. You don't need more holes in your head!