

17 Things You Should Know Before Getting Your Nose Pierced

A facial piercing makes a bold statement, and nose piercings, in particular, are super popular for guys or girls. Be sure to educate yourself about the risks and challenges before committing. I hope my personal experience and tips help you with your decision-making.



1. It Didn't Hurt as Much as I Expected

The most common question on anyone's mind is: "Do nose piercings hurt?" They do hurt, but the pain was not as bad as I had imagined. I thought it would be a sharp, searing pain, and it really wasn't. I felt a pinch and a twinge.

Of course, everyone's pain tolerance level is different. If you have had your ears pierced before, this will hurt one level more. People who have zero pain tolerance report pain, but they say it is quick. Keep in mind that because the nerves in your nose are connected to your sinuses, your eyes will water.

Prepare yourself for the fact that a needle will go through your nostril cartilage, but don't get too worked up over it. The worst part is that the needle will be right in your face, so you have to close your eyes to avoid looking at it. Overall, nose piercing pain is bearable, and it is worth it if you really want it.

2. Some Nose Ring Metals Are Safe and Some Cause Allergies or Sensitivity

The Safest Metals to Use:

- **Titanium:** This is great for people with sensitive skin. It not only looks great, but it is also the safest metal for all body jewelry.
- **Surgical Stainless Steel:** Surgical steel is a bit cheaper than titanium and is a very common metal used for body jewelry. It is safe to use, but it is not 100% biocompatible like titanium is. Most people can tolerate it just fine, but people with sensitive skin should choose titanium instead.
- **Gold:** Gold is gorgeous, but it is easily rejected by the body. Some people may be able to pull off wearing it without any irritation once their piercing has healed, but gold should not be used on new piercings. Once the piercing has fully healed, choose 14k or 18k gold. Do not use gold-plated jewelry.
- Metals That Are Not Recommended:
- **Silver:** Sterling silver easily tarnishes and causes allergic reactions and bacterial growth.
- **Nickel:** A lot of people develop a rash when their skin is exposed to nickel.
- Any other metal that is not titanium or stainless steel.

I started out with titanium, and it worked great. I had no reaction to it whatsoever. I bought a cheaper piece to replace it with, and that was fine for me, too. If you're allergic to nickel in any form, I suggest not even trying the pieces that have a nickel base.

My friend got a different piercing, and she swapped out to some inexpensive studs. Needless to say, anytime she put them in, within a day or less, her skin turned red and puss appeared. It was unattractive, to say the least, and also very uncomfortable for her. Don't go cheap with metal that you're using in your body. Save up if you have to, but don't skimp.

3. There Are Multiple Types of Nose Rings

- There are so many shapes and sizes to choose from, so you really need to make sure that you learn about the different types and sizes of nose jewelry before you talk to your piercer.
- If you're like me, you've probably seen the typical nose piercing stud that is L-shaped or the hoop. But, you've probably never heard of "nose screws." I hadn't heard of them either. They are also called curved nose studs, and they, unlike the straight nose studs, have a bit of a curve to the tail, so you have to turn them in order to put them in. The shape makes it harder for them to fall out by accident, but it also makes it harder—and more painful—to remove and insert them. I got one when my nose was first pierced, and it wouldn't come out—at least not easily anyway.
- Ask your piercer what he or she is using to make sure that you are able to remove your nose stud.

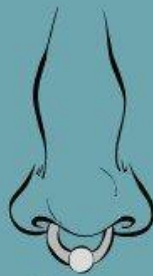
Types of Nose Jewelry

- Nose stud/nose bone
- Nose hoop
- Circular barbell
- Nostril screw
- L-shaped nose pin a.k.a. fishtail
- Captive bead ring

Types of Nose Piercings



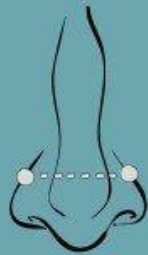
Nostril



Septum



Bridge



Nasallang



High Nostril



Vertical Nose Tip

Types of Nose Rings



Nostril screw



Nose bone / stud



Straight barbell



Curved barbell



Captive bead ring



L-shaped nose pin



Nose hoop



Horseshoe



L-shaped nose pin

4. There Are Several Places In Your Nose That You Can Pierce

The most common nose piercing is the nostril piercing. Other piercing locations include:

- **Septal Piercing:** This is a piercing that goes through the nasal septum where there is a sweet spot called the "collumella"—the area between the bottom of the nose and the cartilage. This piercing should not go through the cartilage itself because that would be painful. A septum retainer or a hoop is the jewelry of choice for this type of piercing. This is a popular piercing, but it is not common because there are several pros and cons to consider.
- **Bridge Piercing:** A straight barbell is placed on the bridge of the nose between the eyes. Because a bridge piercing is only a surface piercing it will be highly prone to rejection. Unfortunately, the bridge of the nose cannot handle deeper insertions.
- **Vertical Tip or Rhino Piercing:** A curved barbell is used for this one. Both ends of the barbell will be visible—one end will be visible on the tip of the nose, and the other end will show under the tip.
- **Septil Piercing:** A nose bone or curved barbell is inserted half-vertically on the bottom tip of the nose. This one is really complicated and requires a lot of time. For this type of piercing, some nose structures are better than others. Usually a wider septum area is preferable because there is more area to work with.
- **Nasallang Piercing:** This is a tri-nasal piercing that goes through both the nostril and the septum. It will look like you have two nostril piercings on either side of your nose, but the piercing uses just one straight barbell that goes straight across.

5. You Risk Getting an Infection or Something Worse

As with all body modifications, there are a number of risks involved. Make sure you learn about these risks and about how to avoid them because an infected nose will not be a cute nose.

1. **Infection:** Staphylococcus bacteria is present in large numbers in the nasal cavity area. Signs of an infected nose piercing include: persistent swelling, pus, aches or pain, and excessive bleeding. If you have a bump, this is a likely sign of infection. A bump could be caused by an allergic reaction to the jewelry or poor hygiene.
2. **Necrosis:** An untreated infection could lead to necrosis, which is the death of tissue in the nasal wall. This could turn into a severe deformity, and the tissue would have to be removed.
3. **Perichondritis:** This is an infection caused by the bacteria *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* where the cartilage in your nose becomes inflamed, which can lead to tissue death.
4. **Septal Hematoma:** If you experience pain, swelling, and difficulty breathing, then you may have septal hematoma. This occurs when blood collects between the nasal septum and the perichondrium.
5. **Swallowing Jewelry:** Although this rarely happens, a loose-fitting nose ring could be inhaled while you sleep and lead to choking and death.

6. **Rejection:** Wearing certain metals might cause your body to reject the jewelry. This could manifest with the body trying to push the metal out of your skin or, even worse, absorbing the metal into your skin.

6. Sometimes Cleaning It Feels Like Waterboarding

When I got my nose pierced, the piercer told me that I needed to keep it clean. Here were the aftercare instructions he gave me.

Nose Piercing Aftercare:

1. Wash the area several times a day, but not like a normal human being washes their face. That would be wrong. Instead, fill up a little dixie cup with a saline solution (salt water), and then put your nose in the cup and maybe even blow some bubbles into it.
2. Hold it in there for about 60 seconds.
3. Do this a few times a day to keep it nice and clean, and prevent it from getting infected.

So I followed all of the instructions above, and I felt like I was being waterboarded. I quickly discovered that having a little paper cup on my nose didn't tell my brain that I needed to stop breathing through my nose, so when I blew bubbles, the water would go up the other side of my nose, and my nostrils would burn with the saline.

I finally figured out that blowing bubbles was not the best method. (Was the guy putting me on when he told me to do it?) For me, the best way was to simply hold the mostly-full cup up on my nose while I leaned down into it. Then I breathed through my mouth while I counted one Mississippi, two Mississippi—up to sixty Mississippi. After that, I'd be able to drop the cup and breathe like a normal human being.

7. The Healing Process Will Depend on the Location of the Piercing

A nostril piercing takes about four to six months to heal, but other types of piercings may take shorter or longer (see chart below). You must keep up with the aftercare routine for the entire duration of the healing time. Don't get lazy! Sometimes issues with healing will arise, including getting bumps, black marks, and scarring, or seeing the skin heal over the jewelry and basically swallow it up. To prevent such terrible things from occurring, strictly follow the rules below.

- To help with the healing, clean the area with a saline solution or your own sea salt solution by mixing 1/4 teaspoon of salt with 8 oz. of water.
- Do not use alcohol or hydrogen peroxide.
- Things Not to Do While It is Healing:
 - Don't touch it with dirty hands.
 - Don't apply moisturizer or makeup.
 - Don't go swimming.
 - Don't remove the jewelry.
 - Don't twist it, touch it, or check it to make sure it's still there.

8. It Can Close Back Up

I had to take mine out not quite two months after it was pierced. I thought and hoped that would be long enough—and it almost was. After keeping it out for a week, the outside piercing (on the nostril) was still open, but the piercing inside my nose healed up pretty quickly. I guess that the skin inside was just sensitive enough that it wanted to be done with it before I was. A few people suggested that I just go ahead and force one of the studs through it. But, since I don't like blood or unnecessary pain, I decided it was far more worthwhile to pay someone else to do it with a proper piercing needle and sterilization.

Nose Piercing Healing Time

Type of Piercing	Healing Time
Nostril	4-6 months
Septum	6-8 weeks
Rhino or Vertical	6-9 months
Nasallang	4-6 months
Bridge	8-12 weeks

9. You Might Act Like a Total Dork Afterwards

It's okay, though. You're still cool. Sort of. Just not as much. For me? Well, I didn't realize that it bothered me because it hadn't hurt too much, and I get tattoos all the time. But, apparently, having my nose pierced pushed my brain over the edge. Instead of getting it pierced and walking out, I fainted and felt like I was going to pass out. Luckily, I listened to my body, and I told my piercer what was going on. He sat me down and grabbed a wet paper towel for me to put on my wrists and forehead. Then, he grabbed me a sugary soda to drink. It helped a lot. I felt much better after that, and, in about 5 minutes, I was up and moving. I'm glad I said something because not even a month or so later, I got my blood drawn and passed out, hurting my head in the process. Don't mess with it if you feel faint; tell the person doing your piercing. You'll be glad you did, even if it's embarrassing at the moment.

10. You Can Accidentally Pull the Piercing Out

And it hurts when you do it. Before I got my piercing, I read a blogger's post in which she mentioned that she pulled out her piercing by accident and that it hurt. She said that was why she went with the nose screw. I laughed and thought, "How can you accidentally remove a piercing that's firmly in your nostril?"

I laughed until I did it, too. I'm not sure how other people did it, but, for me, when the piercing was new, every once in a while, I'd feel like I had an itch on my nose. Of course, it was just my body's way of reacting to the stud, but my brain didn't get that message to me quickly enough, and I'd raise a hand and rub the end of my nose. Surely, the little gem would get caught on the edge of my hand and hang out. This happened several times, and I cursed up a storm every time because I had managed to do it again. Be careful, but realize it's probably going to happen at least once or twice.



11. You Have to Re-Learn How to Blow Your Nose

It's something you learned how to do in kindergarten or earlier, but, when you pierce your nose, you have to learn how to do it all over again. While the piercing is still healing, it hurts an awful lot to push against it when you are holding a tissue there.

I discovered pretty quickly that you will wind up with some boogers caught on the inside of the piercing. The little "leg" in there will get all sorts of nastiness on it. For me, this meant that, during allergy season, I'd wind up with gunk on my piercing. One of the easiest ways to deal with it (when it got itchy) was to simply rinse it out the same way you would clean it when you got your initial piercing. Then, blow your nose like normal. Soft tissues are a necessity!

12. It Doesn't Always Show up in Pictures

It doesn't always show up in photos, unless you take a super close-up—in which case, be prepared for a lot of really intense scrutiny of your nose. When I first got my piercing, I took a picture and put it up on my Facebook page. I thought it would be so obvious, but it wasn't. The initial stud was pretty small, and it was nice and shiny, but, in a simple picture from a distance, it's not immediately obvious.

This can be good and bad. If you want to show it off, it can be difficult. But, if you're trying to take "professional" pictures, it won't really damage your look. That said, you can definitely get less or more noticeable ones so that you have a variety ready whenever you need to change the look.

13. People Will Ask About It...And Judge You

Be ready to answer questions. Personally, I prefer to lie. When someone comes up with a brilliant question like, "Did you get your nose pierced?" I just say, "No." I don't explain. I don't ask why. I don't say anything else—just "no." It's awesome to watch someone get confused.

Of course, if you actually do want to talk about it, that's cool, too. I've had some conversations with other pierced people, and we would talk about where we buy our studs and where we got our piercings. One woman I talked to said she wanted to do a nostril piercing. She already had her septum pierced but wanted to know if a nostril piercing was painful. Just like with tattoos, it can be fun to talk about what you've pierced and why.

Some people will think it's trendy or cool. Others will see it as a sign of civilization's decay. Be ready for both. Accept the compliments and ignore the insults.

14. Swapping It Out for a Different Stud Can Hurt

You are pushing folded metal through a small hole in your cartilage, after all. This is especially true when you have a nose screw. I was surprised at how much it hurt to swap out—I thought it would be like changing out an earring. Nope!

The nose is much more sensitive than the earlobe, so you will definitely feel the nose stud going out and the new one going in. That said, the easiest way to make it less painful and easier on you is to make sure things are well lubricated. Make sure to fully wash the new stud with antibacterial soap and water. Then, use some saline solution on both your nose and the stud. It'll slide in much more easily that way.

16. Picking Your Nose Just Got Harder!

I know, I know—no one *really* picks their nose, right? But that goes counter to what I see (and do) in my car. We all know that sometimes picking a nose is where it's at. I'm not implying that we all sit around and do it non-stop, but there are too many boogers lying around for them all to be accidents.

17. Zits Hurt

For those of us who are still unlucky enough to suffer from acne, get ready to suffer more. There's nothing quite like getting a piercing, and then immediately getting a zit right next to it. Besides the fact that a pimple hurts all on its own, you now also have the pain from the piercing near the zit because the skin is swelling up. On top of that, you can't really pop the zit because the piercing is so close that it will rub up against it or possibly cause it to pop before it's ready.

You have to be careful because you don't want to use anything on the zit that might irritate the piercing—especially when it's new. You also have to be careful when you wash it. All in all, the ordeal is not what I would call a fun time.

If this unfortunate circumstance befalls you, dab some diluted tea tree oil on the zit. It helps with the swelling and kills bacteria!

17. It Doesn't Cost Too Much

A nose piercing will not make you broke, and you probably don't need to save money over several months to cover the costs. The price of a typical nose piercing is \$30 to \$80. This is the total cost for the piercing and the jewelry.

If piercers charge separately, then the average cost of the piercing is \$30 and the jewelry is around \$10-\$60, depending on the quality of the metal and the design.