



A tongue piercing = big orthodontia bill

Published: Aug. 3, 2010 at 3:25 PM

BUFFALO, N.Y., Aug. 3 (UPI) -- A U.S. dental professor reports a tongue piercing can result in an a costly orthodontist bill.

Primary investigator Sawsan Tabbaa, an assistant professor of orthodontics at the University at Buffalo, says a young women started "playing" with the tiny barbell-shaped stud in her tongue -- pushing it against her upper front teeth and this forced a gap between her front teeth.

The case study, published in the Journal of Clinical Orthodontics, concludes the barbell forces a gap between the front teeth -- a fraction-of-an-inch gap that may cost thousands of dollars in orthodontic bills to straighten.

The 26-year-old woman in the case study says her tongue was pierced 7 years earlier and every day she pushed the stud between her upper front teeth.

"The barbell is never removed because the tongue is so vascular that leaving the stud out can result in healing of the opening in the tongue, so it makes perfect sense that constant pushing of the stud against the teeth -- every day with no break -- will move them or drive them apart," Tabbaa says in a statement. "It is a basic tenet of orthodontia that force, over time, moves teeth."

Tabbaa notes tongue piercing can also result in hemorrhage, infection, chipped and fractured teeth, trauma to the gums and, in the worst cases, brain abscess.

© 2010 United Press International, Inc. All Rights Reserved.