

## Grills



Oral jewelry is a popular trend among young people who want to make a social or fashion statement, or simply share an experience with friends. "Grills," "grillz," or "fronts" are decorative covers often made of gold, silver, or jewel-encrusted precious metals that snap over one or more teeth and range in cost from \$20 to thousands of dollars. Grills are generally removable, but some individuals have had their teeth permanently altered to resemble a grill.

As with anything that may affect your oral health, it is important to be aware of a number of things when considering wearing a grill. This begins with who makes it. Often, grills are made from cheap, do-it-yourself kits purchased online or purchased from local jewelers. Jewelers are not required to follow sterilization procedures, so the chance of catching a contagious disease from a jeweler is much higher than in a dental office where infection control is required. Another issue to consider is what material the grill is made from. Often grills are made from non-precious metals, which are more likely to result in irritation or allergic reaction compared to high quality metals used by dentists for dental treatment.

Other harmful effects of wearing grills include:

- Grills can limit your ability to close your mouth or bite down all the way, causing stress on jaw muscles and the jaw joint, often leading to headaches, teeth grinding, or soreness.
- Grills made by jewelers usually do not fit the teeth well; often they extend into the gums which can lead to redness, inflammation and large amounts of plaque around the gums. If left untreated, gum disease and bone loss may occur.
- If you eat while wearing a grill, food and debris may become trapped between the teeth and the grill allowing bacteria to collect and produce acid. Acid can cause tooth decay and contribute to gum tissue damage. Bacteria also contribute to bad breath.

If you have a grill, or think you want one, talk to your CDA member dentist about it. Your dentist can help you make a fully informed decision and tell you what you need to know to maintain your oral health. Be sure to brush and floss to help keep your mouth healthy; limit the amount of time you wear the grill; and remove it before eating. Additionally, clean the grill daily to remove bacteria and food debris. Do not use jewelry cleaners to clean a grill; they may contain chemicals that should not be swallowed.

