



[60-Second Science](#) - August 10, 2010

Case Study: Tongue Stud Play Causes Front Teeth Gap

By "playing" with her tongue stud for years, a woman slowly forced open a gap between two front teeth. Cynthia Graber reports

[Clicking sound]

That's what it might sound like if I had a tongue stud, hitting my teeth. Maybe you've seen people with studs in their tongue clicking it up against their front teeth, a move known as "playing." But it turns out that the habit may destroy some smiles.

University of Buffalo researchers noticed that local high school students who had a barbell-type tongue stud commonly pushed the piercings against their front teeth. Then they examined a 26-year-old patient at the school's dental clinic. She'd had been complaining about a large gap that had developed between her front two teeth. Seven years previously, she got a tongue stud. And every day, for seven years, she pushed that stud up against her teeth.

The researchers say tongues are strong, and it makes sense that the force of "playing" will move teeth, even forcing them apart. The case was written up in the *Journal of Clinical Orthodontics*. [Sawsan Tabbaa, Ivanka Guigova and C. Brian Preston, www.jco-online.com]

Tongue piercings have also been associated with infections, chipped or broken teeth, and gum trauma. And the patient? She got braces to push her teeth back together. Which probably didn't look quite as cool as she thought the tongue stud was.

—Cynthia Graber

[The above text is an exact transcript of this podcast.]

