

Keeping your breath fresh



We'll do whatever it takes and then some.

What can you do to fight bad breath?

Whether you refer to it as common, everyday bad breath or the more scientific term, halitosis, it's a condition you don't want.

The best way to address this condition is to brush twice a day with fluoride toothpaste. Once a day, use floss or an interdental cleaner to clean between teeth.

Bad breath...halitosis, whatever you call it, it's something almost all of us suffer from at some point in our lives. So what causes this timeless turnoff, and what can be done about it?

Infected gums

Infected gums can be one of the most obvious causes of bad breath. To get gums back in shape, brush thoroughly and often with a soft-bristle brush, and get into the habit of regular flossing. Your dentist can advise you of the appropriate treatment for all dental problems.

Dirty teeth

"There are more animals living in the scum on a man's teeth," claimed a 17th-century scientist, "than there are men in a whole kingdom." Whether or not there is any truth in this, teeth can certainly collect their fair share of odor-producing debris. To keep oral bacteria to a minimum, frequently brush (with or without toothpaste) or even just swish water in the mouth.

A foul tongue

Many dentists believe that keeping a clean tongue may be even more effective at arresting offensive breath than keeping teeth clean. Tongue-brushing is something the ancient Romans did regularly; Mohammed also encouraged his followers to practice the custom. Brush very gently, with a soft-bristle brush and keep away

from the very back of your tongue as this may cause a gagging reaction.

An empty stomach

Skipping meals can cause foul breath by reducing the production of saliva needed to flush away bacteria from teeth, tongue and gums. Stress can also lead to a dry mouth, which can cause double trouble when coupled with the increase in stomach acid that stress can cause. Chewing gum and lozenges can step up saliva flow, as can between-meal snacks such as fresh fruits and vegetables.

Smoking

Because it sours the mouth and disrupts digestion, smoking has been linked to bad breath. Chewing tobacco can also foul the breath.

Overuse of mouthwashes

Ironic as it may sound, mouthwashes may actually worsen a bad breath problem by irritating oral tissue, although it does mask bad odors temporarily. For an emergency pick-up, try a quick rinse with a mix of water and a few drops of peppermint oil.

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- Dry mouth
- Mouth sores
- Sensitive teeth
- TMJ