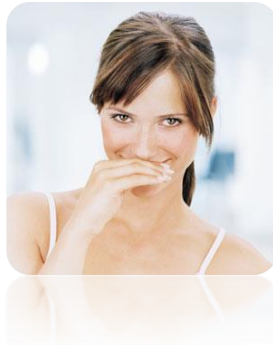




HALITOSIS/ BAD BREATH

Bad breath (halitosis) can be an unpleasant and embarrassing condition. Many of us may not realize that we have bad breath, but everyone has it from time to time, especially in the morning.

There are various reasons one may have bad breath, but in healthy people, the major reason is due to microbial deposits on the tongue, especially the back of the tongue. Some studies have shown that simply brushing the tongue reduced bad breath by as much as 70 percent.



What may cause bad breath?

- **Morning time** – Saliva flow almost stops during sleep and its reduced cleansing action allows bacteria to grow, causing bad breath.
- **Certain foods** – Garlic, onions, etc. Foods containing odour-causing compounds enter the blood stream; they are transferred to the lungs, where they are exhaled.
- **Poor oral hygiene habits** – Food particles remaining in the mouth promote bacterial growth.
- **Periodontal (gum) disease** – Colonies of bacteria and food debris residing under inflamed gums.
- **Dental cavities and improperly fitted dental appliances** – May also contribute to bad breath.
- **Dry mouth (Xerostomia)** – May be caused by certain medications, salivary gland problems, or continuous mouth breathing.
- **Tobacco products** – Dry the mouth, causing bad breath.
- **Dieting** – Certain chemicals called ketones are released in the breath as the body burns fat.

- **Dehydration, hunger, and missed meals** – Drinking water and chewing food increases saliva flow and washes bacteria away.
- **Certain medical conditions and illnesses** – Diabetes, liver and kidney problems, chronic sinus infections, bronchitis, and pneumonia are several conditions that may contribute to bad breath.

What can I do to prevent bad breath?

- **Practice good oral hygiene** – Brush at least twice a day with an ADA approved fluoride toothpaste and toothbrush. Floss daily to remove food debris and plaque from in between the teeth and under the gumline. Brush or use a tongue scraper to clean the tongue and reach the back areas. Replace your toothbrush every 2 to 3 months. If you wear dentures or removable bridges, clean them thoroughly and place them back in your mouth in the morning.
- **See your dentist regularly** – Get a check-up and cleaning at least twice a year. If you have or have had periodontal disease, your dentist will recommend more frequent visits.
- **Stop smoking/chewing tobacco** – Ask your dentist what they recommend to help break the habit.
- **Drink water frequently** – Water will help keep your mouth moist and wash away bacteria.
- **Use mouthwash/rinses** – Some over-the-counter products only provide a temporary solution to mask unpleasant mouth odour. Ask your dentist about *antiseptic rinses* that not only alleviate bad breath, but also kill the germs that cause the problem.

