How's Your Breath?

Although bad breath can be embarrassing, you can find relief. The key is to not mask symptoms but to deal with the source of the problem.

Bad breath has many causes. They include:

Food: When food particles get stuck around your teeth they collect bacteria and cause a foul odor.

Tobacco products: Smoking causes an unpleasant mouth odor. Tobacco irritates gums and reduces the ability to taste foods.

Dry mouth: This occurs when saliva flow is reduced. It can be caused by medications, salivary gland problems or continuously breathing through the mouth.

Gum disease: Persistent bad breath or a bad taste in the mouth can be a warning sign of gum disease, which is caused by plaque.

Medical conditions: Sinus and lung infections, bronchitis, and postnasal drip can aggravate bad breath. Chronic acid reflux and diabetes may sweeten breath.

To improve your breath, start with better dental hygiene, and consider lifestyle changes. Be sure to visit your dentist. Regular dental checkups can help get rid of the plaque and bacteria that build up on your teeth.



Did you know?

More than 80 million Americans suffer from bad breath.[1]

Quick bites

To help reduce or prevent bad breath:

- Scrape or brush your tongue
- Brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste
- Floss each day to remove food particles between teeth
- Drink lots of water and limit sugar-sweetened beverages
- Use a mouthwash that kills plaque
- Chew sugarless gum
- Avoid sticky, sugary foods
- Stop smoking and chewing tobacco-based products
- Change your toothbrush every three to four months

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1 Academy of General Dentistry, "What is Halitosis?" web.

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