

Everything you ever want to know about BAD BREATH but were afraid to ask.

What is bad breath?

Most of us have had bad breath some time or another. It may be barely noticeable or strong enough to turn people off. Bad breath can spoil your self-confidence and cause embarrassment.

Halitosis or bad breath is caused by Volatile Sulphur Compounds (VSC) which are produced by bacteria that live in the mouth.

What causes bad breath?

There are many causes of bad breath. Morning breath is a common problem most of us experience. Foods such as garlic and onions can cause mouth odours. Dental diseases, systemic diseases, stomach problems, hormonal changes, drugs, stress and changes in the amounts of mouth bacteria can all result in bad breath. 90% of bad breath comes from the mouth and is treatable. Medical problems are behind a small percentage of bad breath cases. Please visit a dentist first to treat the most common causes of halitosis.

How can I tell if I have bad breath?

The most reliable at home method is to ask a family member or friend who you know will give you an honest answer. Bad breath changes in intensity at different times so it may be at its worst in the morning for some individuals and in the afternoon for others. One way of assessing is to lick your wrist and then wait until it dries. Sniffing your wrist will then inform you as to whether some odour is present on your breath.

What can I do to treat my bad breath?

Use a tongue scraper such as Oolite to gently remove the coating of plaque from your tongue. Take extra care not to cut your tongue. This should be done every morning and evening.

Use a mouthwash like STEP4 that contains Xylitol. It acts as a volatile sulfur compound oxidizer. Mouthwashes should not contain alcohol because this further dries out your mouth and can compound the bad breath problem.

Brush with a pea-sized amount of a chlorine dioxide containing toothpaste at least twice daily because the chlorine dioxide actually destroys sulphur compounds at the molecular level.

Brush your teeth, gums, cheeks, palate and tongue for at least 2 minutes. Electric or ultrasonic toothbrushes can be highly effective aids.

Floss at least once daily and preferably in the evening.

If you wear dentures or other mouth appliances then use a very soft brush to clean you gum areas and the roof of your mouth. Dentures and appliances should be brushed in the morning and evening. Dentures can be soaked in a chlorine dioxide mouthwash overnight.

If you smoke then your mouth gets dried out. It is important to stimulate your salivary flow to keep your mouth moist. Frequent sipping on water, chewing sugarless gum and candies and avoiding acidic juices and soft drinks help to keep the saliva flowing. Speak to your doctor regarding a saliva substitute such as Salix.

If you take medications that dry the mouth then please try to keep your mouth moist as was recommended for smokers above and also contact and speak to your physician with regards to a saliva substitute or possible modifications to your medications.

Avoid or decrease your intake of foods rich in onions, garlic or heavily spiced. Reducing fatty food intake will also decrease mouth odours.

Use fruits and fruit juices as snacks to help control hunger odour.

Visit your dentist regularly for check-ups and cleanings to reduce the amounts of bacteria in your mouth and to treat any cavities or gum disease.

Visit your doctor for an annual check-up to help prevent serious health problems and bad breath associated with them.

Try to eat a healthy, balanced diet.

If Chronic Bad Breath Continues ...

Your dentist can refer you to a Fresh Breath Clinic to assess and treat your chronic bad breath and taste with individualized treatments. You can expect your visit to be supportive, professional and discreet.

For further information please see www.freshbreath.ca

**If you have any further questions please call our office at 905-508-2244.
We love to hear from our patients.**