



## Halitosis (Bad Breath)

There are some things that others may not tell you. Having bad breath can be one of them yet it's something we have all had at some point. If people are backing away from you, always offering a mint, or have flat out told you that you have bad breath, it's time to take action.

**Lick the back of your wrist and wait for your saliva to dry. Take a sniff. This will give you an idea of what your breath smells like.**

The majority of bad breath is caused by poor oral hygiene and/or diet. Treatment is as simple as a change in habits:

### Oral Hygiene

- Brush your teeth at least twice daily
- Floss to get in between teeth
- Change your toothbrush every 3-4 months
- Use a separate toothbrush or a tongue scraper to get your tongue clean
- Use an electronic toothbrush for more effective results
- Mouthwash may be used to supplement brushing and flossing but is not a substitute

### Diet

- Sugar, coffee, and alcohol and cause bad breath
- Strong and spicy foods may temporarily cause strong odours but smells from foods such as garlic and onions can be released up to 72 hours after eating them
- Drink lots of water

- Eat a balance diet
- Chewing sugar-free gum can increase saliva production which can help flush out the mouth

Chronic bad breath from poor oral hygiene can lead to more than a missed kiss...it can be a sign of gum disease that leads to tooth decay and tooth loss.

If your diet and oral care routines are as they should be, bad breath may be a sign of other health issues that you will want to address with your family doctor:

- Gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD) or stomach ulcers
- Diabetes
- Gum disease
- Liver or kidney ailments
- Dry Mouth – a lack of saliva prevents food particles and bacteria from being flushed away
- Medication – some medications can lead to dry mouth. Mention it to your doctor as there may be alternative available to you.
- Crash dieting – when your body accesses fat stores, the breakdown of fat can cause a smell

Regular dental check-ups will help keep bacteria at bay and ensure that there are no more serious oral health issues looming.

**Sources:** [www.youroralhealth.ca](http://www.youroralhealth.ca),  
[www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Bad-breath](http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Bad-breath)