

WHAT IS HALITOSIS OR BAD BREATH

What is Halitosis?. In most cases it originates from the gums and tongue. The odor is caused by bacteria from the decay of food particles, other debris in your mouth, and poor oral hygiene. The decay and debris produce a sulfur compound that causes the unpleasant odor.

What causes bad breath and what can be done about it?

Bad breath is primarily caused by poor oral hygiene, but can also be caused by retained food particles or gum disease. Proper brushing including brushing the tongue, cheeks, and the roof of the mouth will remove bacteria and food particles. Flossing removes bacteria, plaque and food that may be trapped between teeth. Mouth rinses are effective in temporary relief of bad breath.

Does bad breath come from other sources than the mouth?

Bad breath also may occur in people who have a medical infection, gum disease, diabetes, kidney failure, or a liver malfunction. Xerostomia (dry mouth) and tobacco also contribute to this problem. Cancer patients who undergo radiation therapy may experience dry mouth. Even stress, dieting, snoring, age and hormonal changes can have an effect on your breath. An odor that comes from the back of your tongue may indicate post-nasal drip. This is where the mucus secretion, which comes from the nose and moves down your throat, gets stuck on the tongue and causes an odor. Bad breath originating in the stomach, however, is considered to be extremely rare.

Why is saliva so important in the fight against bad breath?

Saliva is the key ingredient in your mouth that helps keep the odor under control because it helps wash away food particles and bacteria, the primary cause of bad breath. When you sleep, however, salivary glands slow down the production of saliva allowing the bacteria to grow inside the mouth. To alleviate "morning mouth," brush your teeth and eat a morning meal. Morning mouth also is associated with hunger or fasting. Those who skip breakfast, beware because the odor may reappear even if you've brushed your teeth.

Do certain foods cause bad breath?

Very spicy foods, such as onions and garlic, and coffee may be detected on a person's breath for up to 72 hours after digestion. Onions, for example, are absorbed by the stomach and the odor is then excreted through the lungs.

How do I control bad breath?

The main key to controlling bad breath is to practice good oral hygiene, such as brushing and flossing your teeth at least twice a day. To alleviate the odor, clean your tongue with your toothbrush or a tongue scraper. Chewing SUGAR FREE gum also may help control the odor. If you have a removable appliance, clean the appliance thoroughly before placing it back in your mouth. Before you use mouth rinses, deodorizing sprays or tablets, talk with your dentist because these products only mask the odor temporarily, and some products work better than others.

What is Dr. Markiewicz's role?

Visit Dr. Markiewicz regularly because checkups will help detect any problems. Cleanings get rid of the plaque and bacteria that build up on your teeth. If you think that you suffer from bad breath, Dr. Markiewicz can help determine its source. If the problem is caused from a systemic source (internal), such as an infection, you may be referred to your family physician

Anthony Markiewicz, DDS, FAGD
Fellow of the Academy of General Dentistry
852 North Route 83
Mundelein, IL 60060
847/566-2811
www.amdds.com

