

# Good news about fighting bad breath

Bad breath, also known as halitosis, can be embarrassing. But it's usually curable and quite common. In fact, more than 50% of the world's population has issues with bad breath. Here's what you can do to help avoid this problem.

## How it develops

In general, bad breath is caused by odor-producing bacteria as well as the bad-smelling compounds released by bacteria. Chronic bad breath can be the result of:

- Oral conditions like poor oral hygiene, gum disease, tooth decay and dry mouth
- Respiratory tract conditions like sinusitis, tonsillitis and bronchial tract problems
- Other medical conditions
- Certain medications
- Tobacco usage

Temporary bad breath is often caused by certain foods and beverages. See the lists below for foods and drinks you might want to avoid on some occasions.

## Ways to keep breath fresher

- **Visit your dentist regularly.** Let your dentist know if you've been experiencing bad breath, what medical conditions you have and which medications you take. Your dentist can help you determine the cause. You may be referred to your physician to see if bad breath is caused by a medical condition or medication.
- **Maintain daily oral hygiene habits** to keep odor-causing bacteria at bay. Brush your teeth with a fluoride toothpaste twice a day for two minutes each time and floss daily. You may also want to use a [mouthwash](#) to help temporarily freshen breath and wash away debris.
- **Replace your toothbrush every three to four months**, or sooner if the bristles are frayed or worn. A worn toothbrush won't clean your teeth as well as a new one.

- **Clean dentures** and **dental appliances** like a retainer or mouth guard daily and after use. Dry before storing.
- **Chew sugar-free gum** sweetened with xylitol to help stimulate saliva flow that cleans your mouth. It also temporarily freshens breath.
- **Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of water to wash food and bacteria from your mouth and help prevent odor-causing dry mouth. Limiting caffeine and alcohol will also help prevent dehydration and dry mouth.
- **Avoid all tobacco, including vaping**, as tobacco and vaping liquids dry out your mouth, contribute to gum disease and cause the dreaded "ashtray breath."

## Foods and drinks that have an effect on breath

Eating a diet that's low in sugar and refined carbohydrates can help you avoid oral diseases that cause bad breath. What you eat also has a temporary effect on your breath.

### Foods that help freshen breath:

- |          |            |                |
|----------|------------|----------------|
| • Apples | • Yogurt   | • Pears        |
| • Celery | • Carrots  | • Strawberries |
| • Mint   | • Cinnamon |                |

### Foods and beverages that cause bad breath:

- |           |               |            |
|-----------|---------------|------------|
| • Tea     | • Tuna        | • Pastrami |
| • Pickles | • Radishes    | • Cabbage  |
| • Onions  | • Garlic      | • Coffee   |
| • Alcohol | • Spicy foods |            |

*Even if you aren't around people as much as usual, it's still important to keep fresh breath and maintain good oral health habits for the long-term health of your smile.*

<https://www.deltadental.com/us/en/protect-my-smile/good-news-about-fighting-bad-breath.html>