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What Causes Bad Breath Anyway?

By Thuvarakan Tharmalingam

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We have all suffered from an occasional case of bad breath. It's estimated that 50 to 65 percent of the population suffer from bad breath. A few unfortunate people suffer from chronic bad breath, seeming never to get rid of the foul odor that escapes every time they open their mouth. But what is the main cause of bad breath?

Like all living organisms, we have a variety of other organisms that live in or on us in a constant balance of life. In case of bad breath, the main cause is the bacteria that normally occur within your mouth; or more specifically the waste products these bacteria produce from their normal biological life.

Life of Bacteria in Your Mouth

Your body is a host to billions of bacteria, and the majority of them are beneficial to you; there are bacteria in your stomach which aid food digestion, there are helpful bacteria on your skin which protect you against other harmful bacteria, and there are bacteria that just love the environment of your mouth. The last type is called anaerobic bacteria.

Anaerobic bacteria live best in conditions where there is no oxygen. There are plenty of places for anaerobic bacteria to live in your mouth; under the gum line, on the back of your tongue, between the teeth, and just about any place in your mouth that may be covered by a thin film. It is the waste products of the anaerobic bacteria that cause bad breath.

Again, a person's mouth is home to hundreds of different species of bacteria. There is a constant battle going on in your mouth at all times. A battle for living space between that cause bad breath and those that don't. The precise balance between these types of bacteria, determines the freshness of your breath.

How Do They Cause Bad Breath?

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Through normal living process, these bacteria produce waste products in your mouth. The most common of these are volatile sulfur compounds with very unpleasant odor. These compounds are referred to as "volatile" because they readily evaporate when exposed to air under normal temperatures. This volatility of these compounds can offend those around you very quickly.

While these volatile sulfur compounds are principal factor of bad breath cause, the anaerobic bacteria produce numerous other compounds that also have such offensive odors. They include: Cadaverine – creates the smell associated with corpses Putrescine – causes the odor of decaying meat Skatole – has the characteristic smell of human feces Isovaleric Acid – produces the smell of sweaty feet

What Do Anaerobic Bacteria Eat?

The waste products mentioned above are produced as anaerobic bacteria digest proteins. Therefore, anytime you eat a source of protein, the bacteria in your mouth get a meal too.

Even without an obvious source of protein, the anaerobic bacteria in your mouth can find a protein source anytime. There are many natural protein sources in your mouth, from dead skin cells to proteins found in saliva.

Conclusion

While you can't do anything about the fact that bacteria live in your mouth, it is important to realize that the disturbed balance between anaerobic bacteria and other types is a key factor in the cause of bad breath. You should do everything you can to make the conditions of your mouth as unattractive to anaerobic bacteria as possible.

Thuvarakan Tharmalingam had been a long-term sufferer of bad breath or halitosis. He has created to share his knowledge of bad breath—acquired through a lot of research. The above article is written to inform people. It should not be treated as professional medical/dental advice.

You Have Bad Breath? How to Avoid it!

By Jeremy Noland

Who wants to be talking to the man/woman of your dreams only to find out later that you had bad breath?

Bad Breath can be an embarrassing problem. How do you avoid bad breath? That is a tough question. Below we have a list of actions to take in order to help with your bad breath problem:

. Rinse your mouth after your meals. This a temporary solution and works at times.

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- . Cut down on spicy foods. Spicy food also adds to the cause and increase the unpleasant odor.
- . Brush your teeth when you wake up in the morning and before you go to bed in night. Make sure you brush your tongue and cheeks too.
- . Drink water throughout the day.
- . Don't smoke or chew tobacco.
- . Use toothpaste which neutralize sulfur compounds and have anti-bacterial properties.
- . Do not skip your breakfast. Missing your breakfast may allow bacteria to re-appear.
- . Visit your dentist regularly.

Below is a list of factors that attribute to bad breath:

- . Chewing of tobacco and smoking.
- . Food which you eat can also produce bad breath. Especially garlic, onions, and spicy foods.
- . Poor oral hygiene. Brush your teeth, tongue and cheeks at least twice a day. Also remember to floss as well.
- . Several health conditions like diabetes, sinusitis, kidney failure etc can also lead to bad breath.
- . Use of dentures, braces which are not cleaned properly.

So how can you test if you have bad breath? One common test is to lick your arm, hand or wrist: wait 5-10 seconds and smell where you licked. If it has an odor; you have bad breath.

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