

# BREATH OF FRESH AIR

*Keep your mouth fresh with these simple tips*

## WHAT CAUSES BAD BREATH?

Whilst there are many causes for bad breath, 90% of bad breath comes from bacteria in the mouth. The bacteria combines with saliva to break down food particles and proteins, and this releases unpleasant-smelling gas.

These bacteria tend to grow in areas that are difficult for us to reach, such as in between teeth, around the gums, on the tongue or inside cavities on the teeth. Therefore brushing alone will not resolve bad breath.

## DOES THE FOOD WE EAT AFFECT OUR BREATH?

The food we eat starts to be broken down in the mouth. As food particles are digested and absorbed into our bloodstream, they are eventually carried to your lungs and given off in your breath.

If you eat foods with strong odours, brushing, flossing and using mouthwash will only cover the odour temporarily. The odour will not go



- Choose a small or medium-sized toothbrush with soft bristles
- Brush all areas of your teeth, paying particular attention to where your teeth and gums meet
- Use dental floss to clean between your teeth and remove trapped food that could cause tooth decay. Brushing alone only cleans 60% of the tooth's surface
- If you use a mouthwash, choose an alcohol-free mouthwash to prevent the mouth from becoming too dry
- Eat a healthy, balanced diet and avoid strongly flavoured or spicy food
- Cut down on sugary food and drink, as it can increase the amount

away completely until the food has passed through your body. This generally does not take longer than 24 hours.

Foods that are rich in sulphur, such as garlic, onion and durian, top the list when it comes to bad breath, because sulphur is a natural source of odour.



- of bacteria in your mouth
- Cut down on alcohol and coffee, as they reduce your saliva flow and increase growth of odour-causing bacteria
- Stop smoking ○

## WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT BAD BREATH?

Visit your dentist regularly. This will ensure that any plaque is removed from your teeth, particularly in hard-to-reach areas. Your dentist can also identify any signs of gum disease and ensure early treatment. Here are some tips on how to keep your mouth healthy:





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## TRUE OR FALSE?

### **Drinking more water reduces bad breath.**

*True! Water helps to flush from the mouth the bits of food that bacteria feed on. Drinking water helps to produce more saliva, which acts as a cleansing agent and dissolves bad-smelling substances in food and drink. Do drink two litres or eight glasses of water a day. Teas such as coriander, spearmint, tarragon, eucalyptus, rosemary and cardamom can also help.*

### **Brushing my tongue reduces bad breath.**

*True! About 90% of odour-producing bacteria (those that produce volatile sulphur compounds) live on your tongue, so remove them the right way with a dedicated tongue cleaner or scraper. Brushing your tongue does not work, as it only moves the bacteria around on your tongue.*



### **Eating mints freshens your breath.**

*True! Chew sugar-free mints after a meal to stimulate the flow of saliva, which will help clean away remaining food particles. However, do note that any relief from mints lasts only a few hours at most.*

### **Lick the inside of your wrists, and if the spot smells (after the saliva dries), it means you have bad breath.**

*True! This is a simple test to find out if you have bad breath. If your wrist smells unpleasant, it's likely your breath does too.*