



Bad Breath (Chronic Halitosis)



Overview

Bad breath that doesn't go away is a problem for many people. It can be embarrassing and frustrating. You may not understand why it happens, or how to control it. But there are ways to deal with bad breath successfully.

Causes

Chronic bad breath can be caused by bacteria in your mouth, and by food particles trapped in your teeth or gums. This may be a problem for you if you don't brush and floss properly. Bad breath can also be caused by an infection or other medical issue, even a problem somewhere else in your body. Diabetes, kidney failure or liver problems can all cause it. You may have bad breath because of dry mouth, or because you have postnasal drip. You may have it because you are a smoker. And you may have it because of something in your diet.

Oral care

To help control bad breath, practice good oral hygiene. See your dentist regularly. Brush and floss at least twice a day. Make sure to brush your cheeks and the roof of your mouth. Brush your tongue, or use a tongue scraper to clean it. If you have dentures or a retainer, clean these thoroughly every day.

Other tips

You can also control bad breath by avoiding things like onions, garlic, and coffee. And if you're a smoker, kick the habit. If these steps don't help, talk to your doctor about your breath. Your doctor can check you for any medical problems that may be causing it.

