

BAD BREATH – WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Written by Dr. Pasha, Published by *The Auroran*



Dr. Pasha shares his knowledge and experience through published articles

DR. Pasha

Halitosis (chronic bad breath) is a tough subject; I talk with patients about it all the time. They're embarrassed, often because they don't know how to fix the problem - if they even know that there's a problem. Which raises the biggest issue: many people with genuine halitosis don't know that they suffer from the condition.

Halitosis comes with significant social stigma, and can isolate someone in the same way as chronic body odour. Halitosis falls into three distinct groups:

- Genuine halitosis- often difficult for a person to be aware of;
- Pseudo-halitosis- when a person suspects that they have bad breath but do not;
- Halitophobia- when, after successful treatment of genuine halitosis or pseudo-halitosis, a person thinks that they still have the problem

Common Causes

In 90% of genuine halitosis cases, the mouth is the source of the problem. The odour comes from bacteria present below the gumline and on the back of the tongue. Decomposing food particles, cells, blood, and saliva's chemical components all contribute to the unpleasantness. When bacteria accumulate around the teeth and gums they cause a localized infection. As bacteria accumulate, a bad odour, or halitosis, develops in the mouth. This happens slowly, often without people noticing.

In the remaining 10% of cases, many different conditions account for the problem, including disorders in the nasal cavity, sinuses, throat, lungs, esophagus, and stomach.

Outlier Causes

On occasion bacterial infections in the stomach can cause bad breath (remember, the route to your stomach from your mouth is basically a big, long pipe). The bacteria, called H.Pylori, attack the stomach lining (the tissue that the stomach uses as defense against the acids that help in digestion), and cause stomach ulcers that have been linked to causing bad breath.

If you have any questions about oral cancer, the risks involved or how to prevent it, please get in touch with me at drpasha@wellingtonauroradental.com

Treatment

While the best option for treatment is to visit your dentist for a thorough cleaning, regular brushing and flossing as ongoing preventative tactics are your best bet for staying out of trouble. Some people like to oil pull but I recommend brushing, flossing and if you like, rinsing with salt water.

Top Tip

Remember to brush your tongue. Most of us forget about it, but the tongue accumulates tons of odour-causing bacteria.

If you have any questions about halitosis and its causes, don't be embarrassed: you haven't done anything wrong! Get in touch with me at my office. I'd be happy to chat with you about the situation and help you come up with a solution.