

Why Do We Have Morning Breath?

Does this sound familiar? You wake up in the morning and quickly cover your mouth with your hand so your partner doesn't get a whiff of your bad breath. Morning breath, halitosis—whatever you call it, it can be unpleasant, and it probably isn't the way you want to greet your partner, or the day.

Here is the simple reason why: when you sleep, your mouth dries out. When your mouth dries out, odor-producing bacteria proliferate. When you sleep, your normal flow of saliva decreases, that's why your breath can be worse in the morning. If you snore or breathe through your mouth at night, you're more likely to have bad breath in the morning than those who don't. In both situations, your mouth is even more prone to drying out, setting the stage for bacteria to grow.

Other Causes of Bad Breath

Some medications can cause your mouth to become dry overnight, worsening your halitosis. That's why older people, who are often on many medications, frequently find their breath more unpleasant in the morning. Smokers also may find they have bad morning breath. Smoking not only causes your saliva—your natural mouth rinse—to dry up but also can raise the temperature of your mouth, making it a breeding ground for that dreaded bacteria that causes bad breath. Allergies, too, can lead to bad breath. The mucus that drips down the back of your throat becomes a food source for bacteria. Should your postnasal drip become infected, it can put more odor-causing bacteria in your mouth.

How to Treat Bad Breath

If you're one of the 65 percent of Americans with halitosis, there is good news: bad breath is treatable.

Brush. Odor-causing bacteria accumulate between your teeth and on your tongue, so practicing good dental hygiene will do a lot to improve your morning breath. When you brush, be sure to do so for at least two minutes, not the 35 or 40 seconds that many people do. After you brush, go directly to bed! Do not eat or drink anything! Also, when you brush your teeth, brush your tongue too. Another favorite source for odor-causing bacteria is the back of your tongue. You'll notice your breath is fresher in the morning if you brush your tongue before you go to bed.

Floss. Brushing alone won't remove the food particles that can become stuck between your teeth and gums. Flossing is as equally important as brushing.

Rinse. Mouthwash will get rid of the odor but only temporarily. When buying toothpaste, floss, and mouthwash, look for the one that has a seal of approval from the American Dental Association. A quick swish won't do it. If the directions say rinse for 30 seconds, then rinse for 30 seconds.

Please let us know if you are experiencing any issues with bad breath and we will be happy to help you treat it.