



# HEALTH



with

# Dr. A. Kumar

## Be careful about Bad Breath..!

It can be very humiliating at times. Bad breath is a very common problem among males and females of all age groups irrespective of their geographical locations, religions & cultures. In medical terms, Bad breath is known as Halitosis. Store shelves all over the world are overflowing with mints, mouthwashes and other products designed to help people prevent bad breath but these products help control bad breath only temporarily. Let us understand the causes of bad breath & some preventive & treatment methods :

**Causes:** Most bad breath originates in our mouth. However, the following are the major causes of bad breath :

**1. Food:** When we eat, the breakdown of food particles in & around our teeth can cause a foul smell. Eating foods containing volatile oils is another source of bad breath. Onions and garlic are the best-known examples besides several other foods, veg & spices. After these foods are digested and the pungent oils are absorbed into our bloodstream, they're carried to our lungs & are given off in our breath until the food is eliminated from the body. Onions and garlic can cause bad breath for as long as 72 hours.

**2. Dental problems:** Poor dental hygiene and periodontal disease can be a

source of bad breath too. If we don't brush and floss daily, food particles remain in our mouth, collecting bacteria and emitting hydrogen-sulfide vapors. A colorless, sticky film of bacteria, called plaque, forms on the teeth. If not brushed away, plaque can irritate our gums & cause tooth decay. Eventually, plaque-filled pockets can form between our teeth and gums.

**3. Dry mouth:** Saliva helps cleanse and moisten our mouth. A dry mouth enables dead cells to accumulate on our tongue, gums and cheeks. These cells then decompose and cause odour. Dry mouth naturally occurs during sleep. It's what causes "morning breath." Dry mouth is even more of a problem if we sleep with mouth open. Some medications as well as smoking can lead to a chronic dry mouth.

**4. Diseases:** Chronic lung infections and lung abscesses can produce very foul-smelling breath. Other illnesses, such as some cancers and certain metabolic disorders, can cause a distinctive breath odour. Kidney failure can cause a urine-like odour, and liver failure may cause an odour described as "fishy." People with uncontrolled diabetes often have a fruity breath odour. Chronic reflux of stomach acids also has been associated with bad breath.

**5. Mouth, nose and throat conditions:** Bad breath is also associated with sinus infections because nasal discharge from sinuses into the back of the throat can cause mouth odour. Throat infections can cause bad breath until they clear. Bronchitis and other upper respiratory infections in which we cough up odorous sputum are other sources of



bad breath.

**6. Tobacco products:** Smoking dries out the mouth and causes its own unpleasant mouth odour. Tobacco users are also more likely to have periodontal disease, an additional source of bad breath.

**7. Severe dieting:** Dieters may develop unpleasant "fruity" breath from ketoacidosis, the breakdown of chemicals during fasting.

**Treatment & Prevention:** Try the following steps to prevent bad breath:

**1. Brush teeth after food intake:** Keep a toothbrush at work to brush after eating. Be sure to brush at least twice a day, for two to three minutes at a time. Never forget to brush at night after taking dinner and after breakfast in the morning before leaving the house.

**2. Floss at least once a day:** Proper flossing removes food particles and plaque from between our teeth.

**3. Brush the tongue:** Giving our tongue a gentle brushing removes dead cells, bacteria and food debris. Use a soft-bristled toothbrush or a flexible tongue scraper. Try to clean as far back as you can without gagging because the bacteria tend to collect toward the back of the tongue.

**4. If you wear a bridge or a partial or complete denture,** clean it thoroughly at least once a day or as directed by your dentist.

**5. Drink plenty of water:** To keep your mouth moist, be sure to consume plenty of water. Avoid coffee, soft drinks or alcohol.

**6. Use a fairly new toothbrush:** Change your toothbrush every three to four months, and choose a soft-bristled toothbrush.

**7. Schedule regular dental checkups:** At least twice a year, see your dentist to have your teeth or dentures examined and cleaned.

**Other home remedies:** It is easy to maintain oral hygiene and keep bad breath away if we take the following simple steps :

**1. Fenugreek:** Take one teaspoon of seeds in half a liter of cold water and allow it to simmer for 15 minutes over a low flame. It should then be strained and used as tea on regular basis.

**2. Guava:** Chewing unripe guava or leaves of guava tree are excellent tonic for the teeth and gums. It helps cure bleeding from gums and stops bad breath.

**3. Parsley is a valuable Cure for bad breath:** Boil 2 cups of water and add about 50 grams of fresh chopped parsley + 2 cloves. This mixture should be stirred occasionally while cooling. It should then be strained

and used as a mouthwash or gargle several times a day.

**4. Juices:** All fruit and vegetable juices are beneficial in the treatment of halitosis and should be taken liberally by those suffering from this disorder. Juices from green vegetables are especially valuable.

Diet for bad breath : A well balanced diet should be taken by those suffering from bad breath. The diet should include seeds, nuts, grains, vegetables, and fruits, with emphasis on raw and cooked vegetables, and fruits. In case of constipation, all measures should be adopted for its eradication. The patient should avoid refined carbohydrate foods, such as white sugar; white bread pasta, pizza, burgers, noodles etc. as well as non-veg foods.

Teach children at an early age : You can teach your school-age children to brush and floss their teeth regularly and to brush their tongues to prevent bad breath. But, don't let children use mouthwash, because many mouthwash products contain alcohol and can pose a risk for children if swallowed. (Ref: Ayurved Nighantu, The Cleveland Clinic Department of Dentistry For any advice from Dr. A. Kumar, contact him through the Asian World

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## TEN MINUTE TALK BOOSTS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS

Educating women about breast cancer increases their knowledge about the disease should they develop a symptom – and could help increase survival from breast cancer, new research today (Wednesday) shows.

The Cancer Research UK-funded study\*, published in the British Journal of Cancer, showed that telling women about symptoms has a lasting effect on their awareness of breast cancer and could encourage them to visit the doctor promptly if they develop symptoms. Researchers found that a 10-minute talk with a radiographer accompanied by a booklet increased breast

cancer awareness in women around 70.

Researchers found that after two years, 21 per cent of the women who received the Promoting Early Presentation (PEP) intervention were breast cancer aware compared with six per cent of the women who received usual care.\*\*

This is the first study to look at the effect of a one-to-one awareness-raising programme for as long as two years on.

Dr Lindsay Forbes, lead author of the study based at King's College London, said: "This study shows that the PEP not only raises awareness in older women

but also does it for a longer period of time than any other intervention of its kind.

"This is important because even in older women, it may take many years for breast cancer symptoms to develop so it's encouraging to see that the PEP helps women maintain the knowledge to detect symptoms and see their doctor as quickly as possible."

More than 860 women aged 67-70 years attending their last mammogram as part of the NHS Breast Screening Programme\*\*\* received either the PEP Intervention, just the booklet, or usual care.

The researchers compared

the three groups' knowledge of breast cancer symptoms, knowledge that the risk of breast cancer increases with age, and their reports of how often they checked their breasts.

The National Health Service Breast Screening Programme in England is now piloting the PEP Intervention in a number of breast screening services.

Professor Amanda Ramirez, who leads the programme of research at King's College London to promote early presentation of cancer said: "If the pilot is successful and the scheme is rolled out across the Breast Screening Programme then we can

look at whether the gains in breast cancer awareness lead to a reduction in the number of advanced breast cancer cases – and deaths – in older women no longer being routinely screened for the disease. With this approach we have the potential to avoid about 500 breast cancer deaths per year."

Sara Hiom, director of health information, said: "A woman's risk of breast cancer increases with age – over 80 per cent of cases occur in women over 50. So it's vital for older women to be aware of breast cancer symptoms so they don't delay seeing their doctor.

"These symptoms include

anything that is unusual for your breasts such as a lump, changes to the nipple like a rash or discharge, or dimpling of the skin.

"The earlier breast cancer is diagnosed, the greater the treatment options available – and the better the chance of survival from the disease."

