

Do Mouthwashes Really Work For Halitosis Sufferers?

This article will begin by explaining a little bit about bad breath (halitosis) and then will take a look at the effectiveness of the various mouthwashes that are available both over-the-counter and through your dental provider.

Halitosis (bad breath) begins with the bacteria found in the average mouth that accumulates mostly on the person's tongue towards the back. The anaerobic bacteria that thrive in this environment is free of oxygen and they love the amino acids that are found in mucus, phlegm, dairy, and other high protein foods and the debris left behind in between the teeth and gums and then produce Volatile Sulfur Compounds (VSC). Volatile Sulfur Compounds have the smell of hydrogen sulfide, which smells like rotten eggs. Bad breath (halitosis) odor can also come from certain foods after they are digested and this odor emanates from the lungs, as well as from medications.

If you don't brush and floss daily, particles of food remain in the mouth, amassing bacteria, which can cause bad breath. Food that collects between the teeth, on the tongue and around the gums can rot, leaving an unpleasant odor. The things you eat contribute largely to your oral health care, including your breath. Items such as garlic and onions, or any food, are absorbed into the bloodstream, become transferred into the lungs, and become expelled in the air you breathe. Until the body eliminates that food, the potential for it affecting a person's breath is present.

As you peruse the hygiene aisle at the stores, you may feel overwhelmed at the choices available at combating bad breath odors. Most of the products do very little to actually kill the bacteria residing on the back of your tongue and if your bad breath is a systemic problem they will help very little. The most they can do is make your breath smell sweet for a limited amount of time by masking the odors as opposed to killing the bacteria. The exception to this rule is mouthwashes that contain zinc chloride or those obtained for your dental provider. When purchasing mouthwashes there are certain compounds to look for:

Cetylpyridinium chlorides are antibacterial and the compound helps to control the number of anaerobic bacteria that are found in a person's mouth.

Zinc chloride products help to decrease the concentration of volatile sulfur compounds as well as bind to the precursor compounds used by anaerobic bacteria to create volatile sulfur compounds

Antibacterial / Antiseptic mouthwashes ability is to kill the anaerobic bacteria that produce volatile sulfur compounds. Though be careful because they contain alcohol and alcohol is a drying agent.

Chlorine Dioxide is an oxidizing agent and when taken exposes the anaerobic bacteria to oxygen which will reduce the amount living within the mouth.

Hydrogen Peroxide is an effective rinse because it adds oxygen to the bacteria that thrive in an environment where little to no oxygen exists thus effectively killing the anaerobic bacteria. Although if you do not have this handy, using plain water will also help loosen up the foods and particles that have become lodged between the teeth and gums. If you leave them there, the bacteria causing the odors think you left them a buffet and will dine to their delight and to your horror as your breath becomes worse.

When you use a mouthwash there is a proper way to get the maximum effectiveness of the product. The goal in using a mouthwash is to kill the bacteria causing the bad breath (halitosis) odor and those bacteria live on the back of your tongue. Therefore, when you rinse you should gargle and make an "aaaahhhh" sound. This will force the tongue forward and the mouthwash will reach the back of the tongue where the bacteria are hiding and significantly reduce their number. Definitely do not swallow the rinse rather spit it out along with the bacteria you just killed.

There are some mouthwashes that you can make yourself from herbs or a combination of herbs and alcohol.

Do mouthwashes really work towards easing the suffering of those who experience bad breath (halitosis)? It depends on the type of mouthwash purchased and whether-or-not it is used properly and/or in conjunction with an effective hygiene program, which should include regular visits to your dental provider, if you do this you, should notice a benefit, as will your friends, family, and co-workers.

About the Author

Anthony Stai is a proud contributing author and writes articles on several Dental related topics including dental plans. You can see more of Anthony's other articles on his [Self-Improvement eBooks](http://www.self-improvementresources.com) informational web site located at <http://www.self-improvementresources.com>